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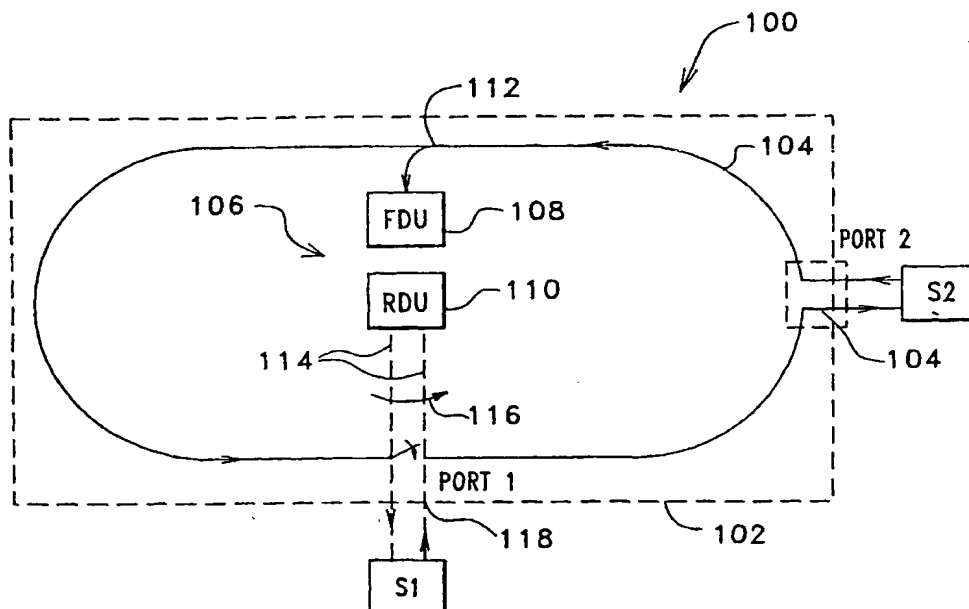
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(54) Title: HIGH PERFORMANCE DIGITAL LOOP DIAGNOSTIC TECHNOLOGY



(57) Abstract: Methods and associated hub arrangements are described for use in diagnosis and recovery in high performance digital loops such as, for example, those seen in Fibre Channel systems. In one system having a hub configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations based on operational status of the system, an arrangement forms part of the hub which arrangement is connectable at points within the hub and between at least two different pairs of the stations for monitoring certain characteristics of the data in a way which provides for non-invasive identification of one or more conditions related to the operational status of the system.

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HIGH PERFORMANCE DIGITAL LOOP DIAGNOSTIC TECHNOLOGYBACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of digital loop technology utilizing a hub structure and, more particularly, to the field of diagnosis and recovery using a hub in high performance digital loops such as, for example, those hubs seen in Fibre Channel systems.

10 The value of the digital loop in high performance systems such as Fibre Channel is without question. Moreover, the use of such a loop has proven to be enhanced through the use of a hub which serves as a central connection point for the loop. In such a configuration, the loop is said to be in the form of a "star". Initial development of hubs saw what may be referred to as an unmanaged or "dumb" hub. As these terms indicate, such hubs served much in the manner of a patch panel, devoid of any monitoring capability as to the data passing through
15 the hub.

Still considering the hub technology of the prior art, attention is now directed to Figure 1 which illustrates a more recent digital system generally indicated by the reference numeral 10. System 10 includes a Fibre Channel hub 12 serving to interconnect a loop 14 including a plurality of stations S1-S4. System 10 further includes a local area network (LAN) 16 having independent connections 17a and 17b with stations S1 and S2, respectively. LAN 16
20 further includes a station S5 as well as a work station (WS) 18. Unlike the earlier generation of hubs described above, hub 12 includes limited diagnostic capabilities. These capabilities have generally been limited to high level observation of the data traveling around the loop. More specifically, these prior art diagnostic capabilities may indicate that certain packets of data are corrupted in addition to indicating the point of origination of the corrupted data. At first blush, this may seem to be extremely useful information for purposes of diagnosis. One must
25 remember, however, that the corrupted data may have traveled through a substantial number of stations between its point of origin and its destination. For example, data originating from S2 and destined for S1 on the loop must intermediately pass through stations S3 and S4. Therefore, it is possible for the data to have been corrupted at any point along this path. An unsuspecting system administrator who immediately assumes that S2 is responsible for the corrupted data can waste enormous effort in attempting to diagnose a problem which may occur anywhere along the
30 loop between S2 and S1.

Still referring to Figure 1, in attempting to perform a detailed diagnosis, a technician may utilize a logic or protocol analyzer 20. S2 and hub 12 are originally connected using cable 22. The analyzer may be connected by disconnecting the original cable 22 at one end and then reconnecting the disconnected end to the analyzer such that original cable 22 is represented as a dashed line indicated by the reference number 22a and an additional cable 24 is
35 used to connect the analyzer with S2. Assuming the problem is not being caused by S2, the technician has little hope of resolving the problem using the analyzer as depicted. Thus, the use of an analyzer in such a scenario is disadvantageous. Moreover, as another disadvantage, it is important to note that the use of the analyzer is intrusive. That is, connection of the analyzer itself modifies the structure of the loop. This fact can cause severe complications in some cases. For example, if the problem is being caused by a loose connector (not shown) at S3, connection of the
40 analyzer may make the problem disappear if the output signal of the analyzer is greater than the output signal of S2 whereby to overcome attenuation being caused by the loose connector at S3. In this scenario, a reasonable technician may assume that the problem has somehow corrected itself, since the analyzer will indicate that there are no errors. Unfortunately, however, as soon as the original connections are restored, the masked problem will return. The

5 technician is then likely to remain suspicious of S2, replacing it and its associated connections and is also likely to suspect fiber 22. As can be appreciated, this disadvantageous hit or miss technique is likely to be a long process. Moreover, each time a connection is disturbed to insert the analyzer, the loop is taken out of service. The process can also be expensive just due to replacement of any number of perfectly good, but suspect components.

10 Continuing to consider the use of an analyzer, it should also be appreciated that analyzer diagnosis is further complicated by the fact that the analyzer is generally configured to monitor only one or two points. This is an important consideration since the loop, unlike LAN 16, is not a broadcast medium. That is, the data present between different pairs of stations on loop 14 is itself different since the stations themselves insert and remove data from the loop. Just through the use of an analyzer, it is very difficult to gain a complete "picture" of what is going on in the loop which may, in fact, represent the only way in which a particular problem may be understood. Not only is the
15 analyzer ineffective in many cases, it is also typically expensive. It is not uncommon for a Fibre Channel analyzer to cost \$45,000.

The present invention provides a highly advantageous arrangement and associated method which resolves the foregoing disadvantages and difficulties while providing still further advantages, as will be seen hereinafter.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 As will be described in more detail hereinafter, there are disclosed herein methods and associated hub arrangements for use in diagnosis and recovery in high performance digital loops such as, for example, those seen in Fibre Channel systems. Accordingly, within a hub configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations based on operational status of the system, an arrangement forms part of the hub which arrangement is connectable at points within the hub and between at least
25 two different pairs of the stations for monitoring certain characteristics of the data in a way which provides for non-invasive identification of one or more conditions related to the operational status of the system.

In one aspect of the invention, recovery from a condition which is adverse to the operation of the system is initiated based on identification of the adverse condition.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

30 The present invention may be understood by reference to the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the drawings briefly described below.

FIGURE 1 is a block diagram illustrating a digital system including a prior art Fibre Channel hub and a prior art analyzer used with the hub.

35 FIGURE 2 is a diagrammatic block diagram of a digital system in the form of a loop which is defined using a hub manufactured in accordance with the present invention in an implementation which utilizes a fixed diagnostic unit and a roving diagnostic unit.

FIGURE 3 is a block diagram illustrating the system of Figure 2 shown here to illustrate further details of construction of the hub in accordance with the present invention.

5 FIGURE 4 is a schematic in block diagram form shown here to illustrate one implementation of an integrated port control circuit manufactured in accordance with the present invention and used in the system shown in Figures 2 and 3.

FIGURE 5 is a partial cut-away view of the system of Figure 3 in block diagram form shown here to illustrate monitoring in accordance with the present invention using the roving diagnostics unit.

10 FIGURE 6 is another partial cut-away view of the system of Figure 3 in block diagram form shown here to illustrate other aspects of monitoring in accordance with the present invention using the roving diagnostics unit.

FIGURE 7 is still another partial cut-away view of the system of Figure 3 in block diagram form shown here to illustrate an initialization procedure performed in accordance with the present invention.

15 FIGURE 8 is a partial cut-away view in block diagram form of the system shown in Figure 3 shown here for purposes of illustrating another initialization procedure performed in accordance with the present invention.

FIGURE 9 is a diagrammatic illustration of the possible physical appearance of a port connection panel of a hub manufactured in accordance with the present invention shown here to illustrate features incorporated into the hub.

20 FIGURE 10 is a diagrammatic illustration of a display screen showing a site management view in accordance with the present invention.

FIGURE 11 is a diagrammatic illustration of display screen showing a stack view in accordance with the present invention which is obtained by selection in the site management view of Figure 10.

FIGURE 12 is a diagrammatic illustration of display screen showing a hub view associated with one of the hubs shown in Figure 10.

25 FIGURE 13 is a diagrammatic illustration of display screen showing a port detail screen that appears through selection of one of the ports in Figure 12 and which provides information and control facilities for the selected port.

30 FIGURE 14 is a diagrammatic illustration of display screen showing a hub sweep view in accordance with the present invention that appears through selection of a logo in Figure 12 and which provides detailed information for each port in a single view.

FIGURE 15 is a diagrammatic illustration of display screen showing a per port diagnostic screen in accordance with the present invention.

35 FIGURE 16 is a partial cut-away view in block diagram form of the system shown in Figure 3 shown here for purposes of illustrating full path end-to-end verification performed in accordance with the present invention on a lobe attached to the hub.

FIGURE 17 is a diagrammatic illustration in block diagram form of a Fibre Channel system including a hub manufactured in accordance with the present invention for use in describing a number of highly advantageous

5 features of the present invention including features relating to diagnostics for evaluation of remote, unmanaged devices.

FIGURE 18 is a diagrammatic illustration of a data management arrangement implemented on a host system including a method used in the host system for collecting data, evaluating the data and providing indications based thereon in accordance with the present invention.

10 FIGURE 19 is a diagrammatic illustration in block diagram form of a Fibre Channel system including two hubs manufactured in accordance with the present invention for use in describing topology mapping performed in accordance with the present invention.

FIGURE 20 is a diagrammatic illustration in block diagram form of a Fibre Channel system including two hubs at least one of which is manufactured in accordance with the present invention for use in describing hot cascading performed in accordance with the present invention.

15 FIGURE 21 is a flow diagram illustrating a first hot cascading method performed in accordance with the present invention on the system of Figure 20.

FIGURE 22 is a flow diagram illustrating a second hot cascading method performed in accordance with the present invention on the system of Figure 20.

20 FIGURE 23 is a diagrammatic illustration of an integrated port control circuit manufactured in accordance with the present invention shown here to illustrate the pin out of the integrated circuit.

FIGURE 24 is a diagram illustrating the hierarchical presentation of display views used by the present invention.

FIGURE 25 is a display view showing a Loop View having a tree type structure.

25 FIGURE 26 illustrates a display similar to the display depicted by Figure 12, however, a Hub View corresponding to Stack 2, Hub 1 is shown.

FIGURE 27 illustrates a display similar to the display depicted by Figure 12, however, a Hub View corresponding to Stack 2, Hub 3 is shown.

FIGURE 28 illustrates the display of a management view.

30 FIGURE 29 illustrates the display of a hardware debug view for use in system diagnosis in accordance with the present invention shown here to illustrate the appearance of a "Ports" tab screen.

FIGURE 30 illustrates the display of the hardware debug view of Figure 29, however, a "Hub" tab has been selected illustrating the appearance of the Hub tab screen.

35 FIGURE 31 illustrates the display of the hardware debug view of Figure 29, however, a "Loop" tab has been selected illustrating the appearance of the Loop tab screen.

FIGURE 32 illustrates the display of the hardware debug view of Figure 29, however, a "Stack" tab has been selected illustrating the appearance of the Stack tab screen.

FIGURE 33 illustrates the display of the hardware debug view of Figure 29, however, an "Agent" tab has been selected illustrating the appearance of the Agent tab screen.

FIGURE 34 is a chart illustrating the data object composition of objects as used by the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Attention is immediately directed to Figure 2 which illustrates a digital system generally indicated by the reference numeral 100 including a hub 102 which is manufactured in accordance with the present invention. It is noted that like reference numbers are used throughout the various figures to refer to like components wherever possible. System 100 includes a main loop 104 which uses Fibre Channel protocol. However, it should be appreciated that loops which employ other protocols such as, for example, Token Ring and Fibre Distributed Data Interface (FDDI) may benefit from the teachings herein. Loop 104 interconnects stations S1 and S2 such that digital data in accordance with Fibre Channel protocol standards flows around the loop in the direction indicated by a number of arrowheads. Only two stations are illustrated as being interconnected by loop 104 for purposes of simplicity. Hubs, such as hub 102 are configured with ports by which stations such as S1 and S2 may be connected with loop 104. In the present example, port 1 is used to connect S1 while port 2 is used to connect S2. While the loop typically uses a fiber optic cable to conduct the digital data, the link between a particular port and associated station is not necessarily comprised of a pair of fiber optic cables. Accordingly, different forms of adapters (not shown) may be inserted into the ports, as will be described in further detail at an appropriate point below. It should also be mentioned the interconnection or link between each station and the hub is illustrated as being quite short in the present figure for illustrative purposes only and, in fact, the link may be quite long. Moreover, each station, including its interconnection with the hub and aforescribed adapter, may be referred to as a lobe on the loop.

Still referring to Figure 2, in accordance with the present invention, hub 102 includes a first embodiment of a highly advantageous diagnostics arrangement generally indicated by the reference number 106. Arrangement 106 is made up of a Fixed Diagnostics Unit (FDU) 108 and a Roving Diagnostic Unit (RDU) 110. It should be appreciated that the FDU and RDU may be configured in a number of different ways in view of this overall disclosure. In Figure 2, FDU 108 is illustrated in a form which allows it to listen to the digital data flowing around loop 104 at a single point 112 on the loop. RDU 110 is illustrated in a functional manner. That is, RDU 110, in the present embodiment, is shown as being connected with port 1 via a pair of dashed lines 114. However, in this embodiment, the RDU may be commutated selectively between the various ports as indicated by an arrow 116. As shown, the RDU is connected in such a manner as to listen to the data present at a port output point 118. By the term "listen", non-intrusive monitoring is meant. That is, data present at the point being monitored is observed, but operation of the system is not affected in any way. In view of the foregoing discussions related to Figure 1 and specifically considering the use of an analyzer, it should be appreciated that the configuration of diagnostic arrangement 106 is highly advantageous. For the moment, it is sufficient to say that the advantages provided by this arrangement primarily derive from the ability to listen at a plurality of points distributed around loop 104. Furthermore, arrangement 106 is considered to be highly advantageous due to the fact that information is obtained and gathered at one location (i.e., within the hub) from all of the monitored points. In this manner, by using features of the RDU and FDU to be described, diagnosis may be performed in view of the system as a whole. Applicants are unaware of this capability heretofore. As mentioned above, loop 104 may have different data present at any of the points between different pairs of the stations distributed around the loop. Therefore, it has been extremely difficult in the past to gain a full understanding of problems such as those described with regard to Figure 1. The present

5 invention serves to alleviate these problems by initially recognizing the need for collection of data from points distributed around the loop and, thereafter, subjecting this data to analysis.

Referring now to Figure 3 in conjunction with Figure 2 and having discussed several basic concepts of the present invention from a conceptual standpoint with regard to the first embodiment of the present invention using hub 102, a specific implementation of hub 102 will be described as depicted in Figure 3. For purposes of clarity, hub 102 remains connected with stations S1 and S2 as is also shown in Figure 2. For reasons which will become evident, this hub implementation will be referred to hereinafter as the diagnostic loop or inner loop configuration. Accordingly, the diagnostic loop configuration of hub 102 includes a highly advantageous diagnostic loop 130 which is submitted to be unknown heretofore. It should be noted that digital data traveling on the diagnostic loop travels in a direction which opposes the direction that data travels on main loop 104 for reasons given below. The diagnostic loop and main loop each pass through port control circuits PCC1 and PCC2 associated with ports 1 and 2, respectively. PCC1 is indicated by the reference number 140a while PCC2 is indicated by the reference number 140b. Each PCC includes a LOOP_IN (hereinafter LI) and a LOOP_OUT (hereinafter LO) connection interfaced with main loop 104. DIAG_IN and DIAG_OUT (hereinafter DI and DO, respectively) connections refer to the interface points with diagnostics loop 130. Further, each PCC includes PORT_IN and PORT_OUT (hereinafter PI and PO, respectively) connections. When the input or output connection of a particular PCC or the PCC itself is referred to, the appropriate port number designation will hereinafter be appended to the foregoing abbreviations. In addition, the RDU is interfaced in the diagnostics loop using RDU_IN and RDU_OUT connections. The port control circuits include a number of highly advantageous features. One important feature resides in the ability of the PCC's to listen to the data present on main loop 104. That is, the data on the main loop is copied onto the diagnostic loop by one of the PCC's and, thereafter, travels around the diagnostic loop to RDU 110 in a non-intrusive manner such that operation of main loop 104 is not affected, thus implementing the capability contemplated by the present invention requiring non-intrusive monitoring.

Referring to Figures 3 and 4, details regarding the design of the PCC's will now be described. PCC's have been produced in accordance with the present invention as integrated circuits per the block diagram of Figure 4 which illustrates a PCC generally indicated by the reference numeral 140. PCC 140 will be described primarily in terms of this block diagram since it is considered that one of ordinary skill in the art may produce this circuit in view of this overall disclosure. PCC 140 includes a plurality of signal drivers several of which are indicated by the reference number 142 (not all drivers are indicated). One by two multiplexers 144a-c, a one by four multiplexer 146 and a Clock Data Recovery Section (CDR) 148. The latter is connected with a low pass filter section 150 indicated within a dashed line. CDR Section 148 serves to recover clock information from incoming data on PORT_IN and retime incoming data to this recovered clock. With regard to details of construction of PCC 140, it is important to note that the data paths defined by the circuitry are high frequency in order to carry the contemplated gigabaud per second data rate. Input and output lines have been labeled consistent with Figure 3. Thus, LI (LOOP-IN), LO (LOOP-OUT), PI (PORT-IN), PO (PORT-OUT), DI (DIAG-IN) and DO (DIAG-OUT) are readily identifiable. Additionally, a number of selection/control lines are present including CDR_SELN, DIAG_SELN, LOOP_SELN, PORT_SEL0N and PORT_SEL1N. The functions of these various additional lines will become evident below.

5 curved line 164, such that loop data from S2 is placed onto the diagnostics loop as well as continuing along the main loop. Thus, state 20 provides for placing data from PI (i.e., the output of the lobe on which the station resides, onto the diagnostics loop, while state 28 provides for routing the diagnostics loop through the PCC. In this way, data from a station "upstream" (i.e., S2 here) in the diagnostics loop relative to the station being monitored is able to flow to the RDU for analysis. While only two ports/stations are illustrated in the present figure, it should be appreciated that
10 data may pass through any number of PCC's on the diagnostics loop in this manner.

Still considering options presented by Table 1 with reference to Figures 3 and 6, it is also important to observe that the RDU may place data onto the diagnostics loop for receipt by the PCC's or, more specifically, by a selected one of the stations. For example in Figure 6, if the RDU is to perform diagnostics on S1, PCC1 may be placed into state 23, such that DI is connected to PO as represented by a curved line 166, LI is connected with LO as
15 represented by a line 168 and PI is connected with DO as represented by curved line 164. It should be appreciated that, in state 23, S1 is effectively removed from the main loop. At the same time, S2 is placed into previously described state 28 such that S1 is effectively placed in the diagnostics loop while S2 remains connected in the main loop and, as such, may operate normally. With the stations in this configuration, diagnosis of S1 using the RDU may proceed in a highly advantageous manner, completely isolated from the main loop. Hereinafter, testing of a module
20 in the above described manner will be referred to as an RDU station diagnosis test. Other states of interest from Table 1 include state 22 and state 7. State 22 allows external loopback of data back to a station with the station out of the loop, while listening to the data with the RDU. This allows for offline diagnostics and is used to support a lobe verification test performed prior to station insertion, as will be described below. State 7 allows for internal loopback testing of a PCC using the RDU to send/receive data for use in hub self testing. It is noted that, in the event that an
25 internal loop-back test is not successful, hub replacement is commonly indicated since the hub is not generally user serviceable. Further details will be provided below regarding the design of PCC's in accordance with the present invention.

With reference to Figure 7, attention will now be directed to other advantages of the present invention. System 100 is depicted during an initialization procedure performed in accordance with the present invention. Accordingly, it will be assumed for purposes of the present example that S2 is the object of a port insert. That is, S2
30 has possibly just been received within port 2 of hub 102 and wishes to be inserted into main loop 104 necessitating a loop reinitialization. An RDU station diagnosis test is performed on S2. This process (not shown here) begins in a first step by verifying that S2 has valid Fibre Channel data by connecting S2 in state 23 and S1 in state 28. While these connections are not specifically illustrated in Figure 7, the reader is referred to Figure 6 showing S1 in state 23 and S2 in state 28. It should be appreciated that a signal sent from the RDU to S2 will pass through PCC2, then
35 through S2, back onto the diagnostics loop, through S1 to arrive back at the diagnostics loop. Having received the signal back, this first step performed by the RDU has been satisfied. That is, at this point the RDU knows by performing the RDU station diagnostic test that S2 has valid data input and so is ready to connect S2 into the main loop.

Still referring to Figure 7, as a second step, S2 is connected into the main loop and the monitoring point for the RDU is moved to PCC1. Accordingly, PCC1 is placed into state 20 (described above), as indicated by curved lines 180 within PCC1, while PCC2 is placed into state 19, as indicated by curved lines 182, in which DI₂ is connected to PO₂ and PI₂ is connected to LO₂ as well as to DO₂. With this arrangement, the RDU can transmit a LIP to S2 via a segment 183 of the diagnostics loop and PCC2. PCC2 (assuming proper S2 operation) receives a
45 response LIP back from S2 and places it onto a main loop segment 184 on which the LIP travels to PCC1. At the

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STATE	PORT_ SELON	PORT_ SELIN	LOOP_ SELN	DIAG_ SELN	CDR_ SELN	PORT_ OUT	LOOP_ OUT	DIAG_ OUT
1	1	1	1	1	1	LOW	LOW	LOW
2	0	1	1	1	1	LOW	LOW	LOW
3	1	0	1	1	1	LOW	DIAG IN	DIAG IN
4	0	0	1	1	1	LOW	LOOP IN	LOOP IN
5	1	1	0	1	1	LOW	LOOP IN	LOW
6	0	1	0	1	1	LOW	LOOP IN	LOW
7	1	0	0	1	1	LOW	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
8	0	0	0	1	1	LOW	LOOP IN	LOOP IN
9	1	1	1	0	1	LOW	LOW	DIAG IN
10	0	1	1	0	1	LOW	LOW	DIAG IN
11	1	0	1	0	1	LOW	DIAG IN	DIAG IN
12	0	0	1	0	1	LOW	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
13	1	1	0	0	1	LOW	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
14	0	1	0	0	1	LOW	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
15	1	0	0	0	1	LOW	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
16	0	0	0	0	1	LOW	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
17	1	1	1	1	0	LOW	PORT IN	PORT IN
18	0	1	1	1	0	PORT IN	PORT IN	PORT IN
19	1	0	1	1	0	DIAG IN	PORT IN	PORT IN
20	0	0	1	1	0	LOOP IN	PORT IN	PORT IN
21	1	1	0	1	0	LOW	LOOP IN	PORT IN
22	0	1	0	1	0	PORT IN	LOOP IN	PORT IN
23	1	0	0	1	0	DIAG IN	LOOP IN	PORT IN
24	0	0	0	1	0	LOOP IN	LOOP IN	PORT IN
25	1	1	1	0	0	LOW	PORT IN	DIAG IN
26	0	1	1	0	0	PORT IN	PORT IN	DIAG IN
27	1	0	1	0	0	DIAG IN	PORT IN	DIAG IN
28	0	0	1	0	0	LOOP IN	PORT IN	DIAG IN
29	1	1	0	0	0	LOW	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
30	0	1	0	0	0	PORT IN	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
31	1	0	0	0	0	DIAG IN	LOOP IN	DIAG IN
32	0	0	0	0	0	LOOP IN	LOOP IN	DIAG IN

Table 1.
Signal Selection
(boldface type is recovered data)

10

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Attention is now directed to Table 1 in conjunction with Figures 3-5. Table 1 indicates signal selections made using any PCC for a number of different combinations of inputs on the selection lines of that PCC while Figure 5 is a cutaway partial view of the system which primarily shows the PCC's. It should be appreciated that the relatively large number of selection possibilities (i.e., states), evidenced by Table 1, provides a great deal of flexibility in the use of the PCC's. As an example, normal loop operation occurs in state 28 in which LI is connected to PO and PI is connected to LO. PCC1, in Figure 5, is connected in this way as indicated using curved lines 160 such that data passes from the main loop through PCC1, out to the associated station, back to the PCC and then back onto the main loop. Such a station is "inserted" in the loop. Also, in state 28, DI₁ is connected directly to DO₁ by a line 162. The purpose of this diagnostics loop connection will become apparent. The flexibility of the PCC becomes evident when one observes that in state 20, like state 28 LI is connected to PO and PI is connected to LO such that data passes through a station wherein the station serves as part of the main loop. S2 is illustrated in state 20 having curved lines 160 interconnecting the main loop with S2. Furthermore, PI₂ is connected with DO₂, as illustrated by a

5 latter, the LIP is routed through S1 and then onto DO₁ to travel back to the RDU on a segment 186 of the diagnostics loop. In this way, it can be verified by the RDU that the LIP transmitted into S2 is received at S1. Having verified that the LIP has successfully traveled through all of the stations on the loop, the RDU may allow completion of the S2 port insert. In this regard, it should be appreciated that counter-rotation of the diagnostics loop in relation to the main loop is advantageous. As one advantage, this counter-rotation allows the port undergoing an insert to first
10 receive the LIP from the RDU in a manner that is consistent with intuition. Thereafter, the LIP travels through all of the remaining stations on the loop. As another advantage, it is submitted that the counter-rotating diagnostic loop allows insertion of ports according to Fibre Channel loop protocol and that, without this feature, the port insert could be non-compliant. Moreover, if the diagnostics and main loops rotate in the same relative direction and the port to be inserted first receives the LIP (not shown), a segment conflict occurs on the diagnostics loop, which has not been
15 illustrated for purposes of brevity, but which is readily demonstrable by one of ordinary skill in the art in view of this disclosure.

Referring now to Figure 8, another highly advantageous initialization procedure performed in accordance with the present invention will be described. Specifically, an automatic external loop-back test is performed during any port insert. Figure 8 is a partial view showing S1 as part of system 100. The external loop-back test is depicted
20 under way for S1 with S1 in state 22 from Table 1. State 22 connects PI₁ to PO₁ and to DO₁ while connecting LI₁ to LO₁, as indicated by a set of curved lines 184. It should be appreciated that the external loop-back test provides for verification of the entire lobe on which S2 resides including the lobe's complex high frequency paths. In fact, because the diagnostics loop is used for monitoring, the integrity of at least a portion of the diagnostics loop is also confirmed. It is submitted that Fibre Channel protocol is completely devoid of this feature, including the automatic
25 implementation contemplated herein. Moreover, Applicant's are not aware of the provision of an automatic external loop-back test in any form of loop protocol that provides for simultaneous monitoring of the looped back data. Such an external loop-back test is effective in the diagnosis of a problem with PCC1. A particular advantage associated with this procedure resides in the fact that the procedure is performed by the unit itself in a rapid manner which is likely to be of great benefit to a system administrator. For example, a system administrator can be notified via a
30 notification generated by the system following a failed port insert, while the failed port is held in bypass mode. This notification may be generated in the form of an email message which is particularly advantageous in instances where the system administrator is monitoring from a remote location.

Referring briefly to Figure 2, it should be appreciated that the present invention may be implemented in an alternative embodiment (not shown) wherein "Port Diagnostics Units" (PDU's) are provided. That is, the
35 combination of the FDU, RDU and diagnostics loop is replaced in favor of a PDU at each port. In this manner, loop data can actually be tracked during its progress around the main loop by the PDU's. It is contemplated that a PDU implementation of the present invention is practical particularly in the form of an ASIC in which the entire hub function is produced essentially as one chip. The introduction of the PDU implementation does not vary the basic concept of the present invention. That is, the advantages derived herein extend from the capability to "listen" at a
40 plurality of points distributed around the main loop. A further advantage is provided, as mentioned, in the form of the ability to simultaneously listen to the distributed loop points. For example, the progress of a specific, individual ordered set can be tracked in its progress around the loop.

Having generally described several hub implementations in accordance with the present invention, details with regard to the diagnostics capabilities of the RDU and FDU will now be described. It should be appreciated that
45 these capabilities may also reside in a PDU implementation. One feature incorporated in the RDU and FDU is

5 ordered set detection. Fibre Channel protocol recognizes ordered sets as four ten-bit characters (FC-0). Ordered sets are used, for example, during loop initialization. The present invention monitors a particular group of ordered sets. This monitored ordered set group includes IDLE, LIP, LIP F7, LIP F8 (where LIP is Loop Initialization Primitive), SOF (Start of Frame), ARB (Arbitrate) and OPN (Open). In addition, any other valid ordered set may be specified as
10 USR (User) as well as an Unknown ordered set and K28.5 (comma character) which is the first character that any ordered sets may have in common and, therefore, is useful in a determination that valid ordered sets are present. A number of features are related in a direct way to the ability to perform ordered set detection at the points distributed around the loop, at least one of which will be described immediately hereinafter.

Turning to Figures 7 and 9, the present invention provides a feature related to the operational state of a Fibre Channel loop. This feature is presently implemented in both RDU 110 and in FDU 108. Presently, five loop
15 states are used herein including INOPERATIVE (the loop is down), INITIALIZING, OPEN-INIT, UP and UP+FRAME (loop is up, with frames). The loop is considered as operational in either of the UP and UP+FRAME states. In Figure 9, a view is provided which is representative of the physical appearance of the back of hub 100. In accordance with the present invention, a loop status indication LED 200 is provided which is illuminated whenever either of the loop states UP or UP+FRAMES are determined to exist. The presence of each of these two states is
20 established using ordered set detection in conjunction with two additional detectors. The first additional detector detects an ordered set that is unknown and, hence, is referred to as an UNKNOWN detector. That is, the unknown ordered set is a valid ordered set but is not a member of the monitored ordered set group which is detected. The second additional detector is referred to as a LINK-USEABLE detector. In accordance with Fibre Channel protocol, more than a certain number of ones or zeros cannot occur in sequence. This certain number specifies a transition
25 density which is a crude indication of invalid characters on the loop. Irrespective of ordered set detection, loop up indicator 200 is not illuminated unless the transition density has not been violated per the LINK-USEABLE detector. That is, if the link is unusable, the loop is said to be down. If no valid ordered sets are detected including the set specified by the UNKNOWN detector, the loop is also considered as being down.

The present invention recognizes that a Fibre Channel system will go to loop up in a sequence of ordered
30 states that is identified through the use of the aforementioned monitored ordered set group. It should be appreciated that the monitored group of ordered sets will appear in sequence as a system moves from the inoperative state to an operative condition and that sequence must occur for proper initialization. Specifically, the first set which is monitored for from an inoperative state is a LIP. Upon recognition of a LIP ordered set, the INITIALIZING state is entered. In the INITIALIZING state, an arbitrate (ARB) or SOF ordered set is anticipated. Once an ARB or SOF is
35 seen, status moves to the OPEN-INIT state. Thereafter, a CLS (close) command is anticipated which is used as a transition to the UP state. It is noted that the close command does not appear in the monitored set group, but is considered as a companion ordered set of the OPN command for use in closing a connection. Arrangement 100 then monitors for data frames (UP+FRAME) by detecting SOF. Thus, once the proper sequence of ordered sets has occurred, indication is provided, for example, via LED 200. Alternatively, the system administrator may receive an
40 indication via software.

Another ordered set detection feature that is implemented in RDU 110 is a counter (not shown) that will count any ordered set for which information is desired to be gathered. For example, the counter can count frames at a particular port. If the counter is left active for a particular period of time, the number of data frames sent over that period is detected. In this way, traffic or events of interest can be monitored. Of course, if the data of interest is
45 known to pass all the way around the loop, the RDU may be set to any monitoring point. As another example, the

5 system administrator may wish to determine how much or how often a particular station is using the loop. Assuming
that the system administrator wishes to establish this information for a station S7 (not shown) assigned ALPA-7, the
counter can be set up to count ARBs or startup frames from S7. In this regard, it should be appreciated that ordered
sets are 40 bits in length. The first 20 bits indicate what type of ordered set it is, while the next 20 bits give further
10 details about the ordered set which usually includes the address of the station the ordered set came from.
Accordingly, the counter can be set up to either use the ordered set just in terms of its type or to use the ordered set
based on all or nearly all of the information available from the 40 bits. For example, only ARB ordered sets from S7
could be counted or, as another example, only ordered sets from S7 "talking" to a station S4 could be counted (not
shown).

15 Another feature in accordance with the present invention resides in the ability to capture Arbitrated Loop
Physical Addresses (ALPA's) by observing data patterns or communications on a loop. It is noted that the ALPA's
are assigned to the various stations that are present on the loop during initialization. More specifically, present
during initialization states referred to as OPEN and OPEN-INIT. Through the ability to listen at points distributed
around a loop, the present invention is capable of determining which ALPA's are attached to each port. That is, an
ALPA map can be generated. There are two methods used to establish the ALPA's connected to each port. In a first
20 method, an ARB command is used. It should be appreciated that the use of ARB commands can reveal all of the
active ALPA's on the loop while listening anywhere on the loop.

Referring to Figure 3, in a second method of mapping connected ALPA's, an OPN command is used. When
using OPN commands for this purpose, the listening point is moved around the loop to establish in which domain the
OPN exists (i.e., where the OPN vanishes). For example, if S1 has an assigned ALPA of 1 and S2 has an assigned
25 ALPA of 2, RDU 110 could first listen at S1. By examining ALPA's with ARB commands, ALPA-1 and ALPA-2
will be seen. Using the OPN ALPA mapper presently under discussion, however, only OPN's for ALPA-2 will be
seen. Similarly, if the listening point is switched to S2, only OPN's for ALPA-1 will be seen. The disappearance of
the OPN infers that the station at the listening point is assigned that ALPA. Certainty as to that being the correct
ALPA is increased, as time passes, when that ALPA continues to be absent at that point. In this regard, a PDU
30 implementation (not shown) is advantageous since the progress of an OPN around the loop can be observed
simultaneously at all of the points around the loop. In this way, certainty is increased as to where an OPN disappears.

Having introduced the reader to a number of concepts of the present invention, an appropriate juncture has
been reached at which some of its advantages can be emphasized. Specifically, it is important to understand that all
of the capability discussed is provided in the hub itself. That is, the need for an external analyzer has been virtually
35 eliminated. At the same, time, however, an external analyzer is inherently handicapped since its monitoring is
intrusive, as described above. The present invention is inherently powerful based on the capability to monitor a
plurality of points distributed around the loop. Other features such as, for example, ordered set detection and the
counter are extremely useful in conjunction with this multi-point monitoring capability. It is submitted that such a
combination of features has not been seen heretofore. In terms of problem identification, analysis can first be
40 performed on the data to evaluate whether or not there really is a problem. In this regard, there can be conditions that
are part of the normal operation of the loop, however, if these conditions persist, then they are a problem. Such
problems can be identified with the multi-point data available through consolidation of information. From another
viewpoint, the multi-point data is used to establish the status of each of the stations in the loop. A particular station
or even the hub itself can be identified as the source of a problem. With status data as to the entire loop including the
45 hub in hand, the status data can be displayed or automatic, predetermined responses may be taken. For example, a

5 defect can be removed. Thereafter, operation of the system may resume automatically. Alternatively, an indication can be provided to a system administrator that the defect has been removed and operation can now be restored. In one feature to be described, beaconing may be employed to identify the actual physical location of a removed defect. Specific details with regard to the display of additional status information will be provided immediately hereinafter.

10 Referring to Figure 10, a display 202 is shown depicting a site management view generally indicated by the reference number 204. The present example assumes a system having two managed stacks wherein stack 1 includes two hubs and stack 2 includes three hubs. Site management view 204 represents an encapsulation of the status of every device that is within the scope of management. Therefore, at the highest level, all of the managed stacks including stack 1 and stack 2 are indicated by the reference numbers 206 and 208, respectively. Also shown, in the form of elliptical circles, are the loops (each of which uses a hub) associated with each stack as indicated by the reference numbers 210 and 212 for the stack 1 hubs/loops and by the reference numbers 214, 216 and 218 for the stack 2 hubs/loops. It should be noted that the operational status of each loop is indicated by the color of the loop in the present view. For example, an up and operating loop is shown by the color green within the corresponding elliptical circle. If any of the loops are not green, further attention should be directed to these loops, for example, using further status display features of the present invention which are available by "drilling down" from the site management view. It should be appreciated that one advantage of the site management view resides in immediately directing the attention of an observer to problem areas, even in the instance of a system administrator having little practical experience. In this regard, it is contemplated that the site management view may be iconified in a way which makes problems apparent via the appearance of an icon.

25 Turning to Figure 11 in conjunction with Figure 10, selection of stack 2, for example by double clicking on it in the site management view of Figure 10, brings up a stack view 220 on display 202. It is noted that hubs may be considered as being in the same stack by virtue of having some type of connection with regard to their management information. For example, the connection may comprise an out of band management cable. That is, this management data is not present on the loops themselves. Stack view 220 displays hubs 214, 216 and 218 (Figure 10) labeled as Hub 1, Hub 2 and Hub 3, respectively. The stack view is intended to highlight information from a configuration standpoint. For example, what types of physical connections are present in each hub and whether these connections are optical (shortwave or longwave) or copper. These connection types will be discussed further at appropriate points below. In addition, it is indicated which of the hubs may possibly have management agents in them since the management agent is what provides the information used to make these determinations. A color indicator 222 (the color of which cannot be seen due to format limitations of the present application, as is the case throughout the figures) comprising the background of the stack indicates an overall status derived from the status of each hub. For example, the background is green if all of the hubs are fully functional.

40 Referring to Figures 9-12, selection of one of the hubs in stack view 220 leads to a hub view 224 associated with the selected hub. Figure 12 illustrates this view for Hub 2 of stack 2 (indicated by reference number 216 in Figure 10). It is noted that additional Hub Views will be provided below. Hub view 224 may also be referred to as a back-of-box view since the image is intended to physically represent the appearance of the corresponding panel on the hub itself. It is noted that a great deal of the information available through the use of the present invention is presented in the hub view. At a glance, any of the ports can be seen including whether each port is in a functional status. Alternatively, it is indicated that ports need attention or a port is in a failure mode. This indication is provided by the background color 226 surrounding each port in gray, green, yellow or red (as noted above, color not illustratable) where gray indicates unused, green indicates functional, yellow indicates the need for attention and red

5 indicates failure. Additionally, a pair of virtual LED's 228 are illustrated associated with each port. The actual LED's corresponding to these virtual LED's are indicated by the reference number 230 in Figure 9 showing a pair of LED's is associated with each port. It is noted that both virtual LED's 228 and actual LED's 230 can be beacons to cause the LED's to blink on display 202 as well as on the hub box itself, as will be further described. Thus, a good or bad indication can be provided for each port of the hub based on monitoring in accordance with the present invention. This feature is advantageous, for example, to anyone in helping to locate hardware of interest. In this regard, it is submitted that the capability to reflect the status of the loop and the use of beacons, as described, have not been seen heretofore. It is also noted that a virtual "Loop Up" LED 232 is provided which corresponds to LED 200 in Figure 9. That is, virtual Loop Up LED 232 is illuminated whenever LED 200 on the hub panel is illuminated. Other indications include Power OK 234, uC (microcontroller) OK 236 and Fan Fault 238 for which the actual and virtual LED's are indicated using the same reference number.

Figure 13 represents a port detail screen 240 which appears upon selecting one of the ports in Figure 12. In this example, port 11 of hub 2 in stack 2 has been selected. A port control box 242 is included in the screen which provides four selectable modes under which the port can be operated. The auto mode is configured for maintaining loop integrity and enabling built in recovery functions at a policy level. That is, in the auto mode, ports will not be inserted that will bring the loop down. The auto mode gives the hub full license to make every port insertion go through criteria to maintain loop integrity. In effect, authority is given to screen every module such as, for example, a GBIC (Gigabit Interface/Interconnect Converter) that is plugged into this port prior to its insertion into the loop. That authority is removed, for example, if the Force Bypass mode is selected. In Force Bypass mode, the port will not be inserted irrespective of validity. The Force Bypass mode can be used to perform tests on an already inserted port or a port can be bypassed prior to its initial insertion. It is noted that other diagnostic capabilities can be invoked in the Force Bypass mode, as will be described. Several other modes can be invoked including Loopback and Force Insert. In the Loopback mode, the port receiver is connected directly to the port transmitter such that a station on the port may do diagnostic self testing (see, for example, Figure 8). In a lobe initialization feature which represents an alternate and more powerful method for testing stations before insertion, the loopback capability built into the port is used to wrap receive back to transmit so as to cause the station to initialize completely before insertion. This feature has the advantage of providing much more confidence that the inserting station is fully functional before impacting the hub and all stations already attached. In the Force Insert mode, a node/station is inserted into the loop irrespective of its operational status. Such a feature may be useful if a node is not behaving well according to the Fibre Channel protocol and it is desired to force that node to be inserted into the loop for observation. For example, the node may not be going through proper initialization. The provision of all of these user selectable modes is highly advantageous with regard to giving the user full control over devices for purposes such as, for example, troubleshooting. In this regard, verification can be performed on devices that are being blocked out for reason of not behaving well. That is, a suspect device can be reinserted to observe whether or not it is bringing down the loop.

Still referring to Figure 13, one feature present in the port detail view is a GBIC display box 244. It is noted that GBIC's have some built in identification information. This information is extracted for display here. The information identifies the specific type of GBIC. For example, a shortwave laser GBIC (as shown), a longwave laser GBIC or a copper GBIC with an HSSDC connector. A state indication 245 within GBIC display box 244 is obtained from both the GBIC and the diagnostic circuitry that is monitoring the port, as described above. A "No Valid Data" indication is illustrated. In this way, it is determined if there is a valid signal and whether or not the node is transmitting valid Fibre Channel characters. A port connect box 246 includes a state indication 248 that is produced by the present invention. While action can be initiated based on no valid data, the present invention further provides

5 for bypassing a node that is in a loop failure state or transmitting LIP F8. For example, if a device is "LIP F8ing", port connect state box 248 will reflect that condition (not shown). Alternatively, if there is a problem with the transmitter on the GBIC itself, it will be indicated.

Referring to Figure 14, if Vixel logo 250 is selected in the hub view of Figure 12, a hub sweep view 260 appears on display 202. The hub sweep view is comprised of a consolidated capture of data for all of the ports of the hub displayed in a meaningful way. Data is displayed corresponding to each port or node on the loop. The port numbers are indicated in a row 264. Beneath each port number is a column of boxes labeled to the far left with ordered sets. It should be noted that the monitored group of ordered sets, described above, is displayed forming a majority of the information in the column. Specifically, LIP is indicated by reference number 265, LIP F7 is indicated by 266, LIP F8 is indicated by 268, OPN is indicated by 270, ARB is indicated by 272, IDLE is indicated by 274, SOF is indicated by 276, USR (User Defineable) is indicated by "Match" at 278 and the Other ordered set (Other OS) is indicated by 280. A link useable indication 282 is provided along with a K28.5, comma character, indication 283. Therefore, the presence of an ordered set associated with each port may be indicated. It should be appreciated that, while quite a number of individual data are displayed, a system administrator can discern meaningful information from the display very readily. Even an inexperienced administrator will immediately recognize the value in this display. An experienced administrator, however, will be capable of correlating the data in view of his or her experience. Other displayed data includes a loop state display 284 which indicates whether the loop is up, down or initializing. Presently, an "Up" indication is being given. It is noted that the various display boxes of Figure 14 may be arranged in any suitable manner and that a warning will come up if a user selects a non-automatic option.

With regard to interpretation of sweep display 260, initializing is a normal process that a loop will go through as the loop is starting up. Initialization should occur for a very brief period of time prior to the loop coming into the up or active state. If the loop stays stuck in initialization, the hub sweep view enables one to be able to see which nodes/ports are involved. More particularly, the presence of LIP F8 is displayed. The significance of this loop initialization primitive was described earlier. Therefore, if a node is in a LIP F8 state, from this sweep view one can readily see which is the offending node. Thereafter, mechanisms also built into the hub can be used to automatically recover. It should be appreciated that this display is highly advantageous since for each segment of the loop one can, at a glance, see exactly which data is being transferred. That is, if that segment is in a quiet state, if it's in initializing or if it's in a failure mode. Alternatively, further troubleshooting may be performed using other diagnostic screens to be described below. In this regard, the present invention provides a great deal of single port visibility through the monitoring that can be performed on a single port. By collectively displaying data gathered for all of the ports in a consolidated view, valuable information is provided as to what is actually going on in the loop. It is submitted that such a view is highly advantageous and has not been seen in a Fibre Channel system heretofore. In order to achieve a display such as this in the prior art, the number of ports would at least have to be doubled with analyzers residing at each of the added ports. Sweep display 260 has further implications. That is, by having the information available from the present invention, automatic actions can be implemented based on analysis of the data accumulated. It should be mentioned that sweep display 260 may be presented irrespective of whether a port or roving diagnostic implementation is used to collect the data.

Referring to Figures 15 and 16, one example of a per port diagnostic screen 286 is illustrated. Port diagnostic screen 286 includes a port diagnostics control box 288, a port selection box 290 and a transmitter control box 292. Using port diagnostics screen 286, it should be appreciated that full path end-to-end verification can be

5 performed from the hub on a lobe. As an example, Figure 16 illustrates a portion of hub 102 connected with station S1. The lobe consists of the GBIC transceiver which includes a transmitter TX_{P1} and a receiver RX_{P1} . The lobe further includes a cable or fibers 294 extending from the hub to a node receiver RX_{S1} and a node transmitter TX_{S1} at the station. The latter may also include a loop state machine 296 that is diagrammatically indicated by an arc extending between the station transmitter and receiver. It is noted that during the full path verification, the hub
10 bypasses the station, as illustrated (by LI_1 being connected to LO_1), such that the node is isolated from the main loop. In the absence of loop state machine 296, data that is sent to the station from the hub is expected to return to the hub so as to perform an end-to-end connection verification. In the presence of loop state machine 296 and being
15 cognitive of the loop state machine implemented, however, an ordered set can be sent to the station which should return a different response. Thus, the operation of the loop state machine is verified as well as the connections in the lobe. The ability is provided to transmit to a port, receive on that same port and detect what ordered sets were seen on the receive. Lobe verification is highly advantageous with regard to diagnosis since there are numerous opportunities for points of failure around the lobe's path. For example, there may be a bad laser or a plug-in connection that is not fully seated. It should be appreciated that this verification is more powerful as compared with an external loop-back test. In an external loop-back test (not shown), the station itself may do some verification with
20 the port in bypass mode. The node would initiate the process and would transmit from TX_{S1} to RX_{P1} . The hub will then loop that data to TX_{P1} to then pass the information back to S1 via RX_{S1} .

The end-to-end lobe verification test of the present invention is considered to be highly advantageous (1) in verifying the node state machine without external interaction and (2) because the configuration on which the verification is successfully performed will not be physically disturbed for purposes of entering normal operation.
25 That is, the configuration will not be disturbed upon entering normal operation. It is submitted that this feature has not been seen heretofore. While port diagnostics screen 286 provides a visual display for purposes of manipulating this lobe verification, the present invention contemplates the use of lobe verification in an automatic process. For example, a capability may be provided for an operator to do a full configuration verification by pushing one button. In response, the system would then go out, bypass every node and do the full path verification on each node.
30 Thereafter, a display (not shown) of the configuration verification results can be provided.

Still referring to Figures 15 and 16, another capability is provided using transmitter control box 292. Through the ability to turn hub transmitter TX_{P1} on and off, another form of verification is provided. Specifically, node verification is provided in response to turning the port transmitter off to a node. If TX_{P1} is turned off, S1 should respond with a LIP F8, or the loop failure character, thus, serving as another mechanism of verification. The
35 capability to selectively turn off a transmitter whereby to solicit a LIP F8 from a connected station may be referred to hereinafter as a transmit disable feature and is considered as being highly advantageous.

Turning now to Figure 17, a Fibre Channel system 300 is illustrated which includes stations S1-S5, a hub H1 and a loop L1. Stations S1 and S2 are connected in L1 while Stations S3-S5 are connected using H1. For purposes of the present example, it will be assumed that two tape backup operations are occurring in which S3 and
40 S5 are both tape devices and S1 and S2 are servers. One backup is from S1 to S3 while the other backup is from S2 to S5. It should be appreciated that Fibre Channel is not a broadcast media. That is, without the hub of the present invention, there is no visibility to all data at all points in a loop. In addition, only two devices can be "talking" at once to each other using a loop. This holds with the aforementioned tape backups going on, since only two nodes can have control of the loop and be transferring data at any one time. Therefore, the two backup operations are in
45 total contention for the bandwidth of the loop at this point in time. Assuming further that H1 is manufactured in

5 accordance with the present invention, at least the ordered sets described above can be counted. Startup Frames (SOFs), for example, show data going through while ARBs show a node gaining control of a loop. By looking at these specific pieces of data, an indication may be provided that there is contention or as to the amounts of data that are being transferred such that, upon analysis of the data, recommendations can be made to either change the time assigned for one of the backups or to segment one backup onto another loop (not shown) since the simultaneous
10 backups tend to slow one another down, as well as to prohibit any other use of the system. In essence, this feature is provided by using gathered information to give one a picture of the traffic or the data frames between the modules on the loop.

Still referring to Figure 17, it is important to understand that information relating to S1 and S2 is provided despite the fact that loop L1 is not managed. In other words, determinations are made regarding a hub or a loop in which H1 is not actually physically directly monitoring the information on that remote loop or hub. These
15 determinations as to the utilization of the remote loop can be made, however, because the hub of the present invention is connected to the remote loop. Utilization may be displayed, for example, in the form of a tachometer style gauge (not shown). Other features may be included such as a threshold for alarming purposes. It should be appreciated that the addition of a hub configured in accordance with the present invention is highly advantageous when added to an "unmanaged" system. Particularly, diagnostic capability will be provided for the existing
20 installation as well as for components connected directly to the new hub. In the example of Figure 17, with regard to unmanaged loop L1, managed hub H1 may not necessarily be able to identify whether it is S1 or S2 that is misbehaving on the unmanaged loop. However, a problem could certainly be isolated to the port of H1 with which the unmanaged loop is connected. It is submitted that these features with regard to visibility of utilization and
25 congestion are highly advantageous and have not been seen heretofore.

Referring to Figure 18 and having gone through a number of different displays, status indications and information displayed, a description will now be provided regarding details as to how these features are implemented using a data management arrangement 320. Initially, information is collected by a hub data collection section 322 which represents all of the hardware "hooks" that are built into hub 102 (Figures 2 and 3) manufactured in
30 accordance with the present invention. This information is stored in a data repository 324 that is resident on a management card (not shown) that is built into the hub. The data is stored in an SNMP mid-structure which is a standard management acquisition tool in networking. It should be appreciated that the available data stored in the memory itself provides the advantages herein (i.e., based on the origination points of the data) in conjunction with its subsequent analysis. The data is transferred via a LAN connection 326 in response to a host poll 327 which is
35 generated by a host system that is not illustrated for purposes of simplicity. It is noted that host poll 327 and the remaining, as of yet undescribed portions of Figure 18 relate to the method steps implemented within the host system. The information is polled in response to a request by an application running on the host system. That is, data repository 324 serves as an SNMP agent which collects the information in response to the host request. While Figure 18 illustrates a poll driven system, it should be appreciated that an event driven system is also contemplated.

40 Referring to Figures 10-13 in conjunction with Figure 18, the host polls information from the hub (or hubs) and will poll in an automatic poll 328 all data generically unless the system is in a diagnostic mode. Therefore, the polled information is used in site management view 204 (Figure 10), stack view 220 (Figure 11), hub view 224 (Figure 12) and port detail screen 240 (Figure 13). The poll of this information is performed at a regular interval which is usually resettable. Generally, the interval may be set from five seconds to each hour. The information is
45 status information which may include, for example, whether a port has been bypassed and if the port has a signal.

5 Thus, the information that is displayed in Figures 10 through 13 is polled continuously. Attributes of the data are assigned to a hierarchy of objects within the system. For example, attributes are assigned to a hub object, a port object or a stack object. Each object is based on knowledge of what components the particular object is composed. That is, a port "knows" that it has a signal and a GBIC may be associated with the port. If another port does not have a GBIC, the lack of a GBIC is actually an attribute of that other port. If a port does have a GBIC, then there are characteristics of the GBIC that are available. As further examples, a hub is comprised of ports and a stack is comprised of hubs.

15 Referring to Figures 10-14 and 18, certain characteristics are observed in looking at the information that is monitored. For instance, if a port goes into a bypass mode, it should be reported why the port went into that bypass mode. This forms part of the information that is displayed on a regular basis. It should be appreciated that in a diagnostic mode a different type of mechanism comes into play. For instance, when the hub sweep view of Figure 14 is polled up, this different type of mechanism is employed. While information will still be polled, control information will be sent as well. Thus, if hub sweep view 260 (Figure 14) is initiated, the hub will use its detector arrangement (i.e., RDU or PDU's) to get information for each port such as the different ordered sets described above. This information will be displayed and observed for the presence of a port in LIP F8. If the latter occurs, an indication is provided that the port transmitting LIP F8 is in a failure status and needs attention. For example, if such a port is in a forced insert mode, the entire loop will be brought down. The status of the port can be reflected all the way up to the loop level (Figure 10) while, if the port number is displayed, the background of the port is highlighted to reflect status. For the LIP F8 failure status, the background highlight is red. Color highlights are represented in monochrome form around ports 2, 3, 5, 9, 10 and 11 in Figure 14. In sum, two forms of diagnostic activity occur. The first is automatic poll 328 which is auto-running all of the time while the second is an intrusive/on-demand poll beginning with step 329 that occurs on demand. The automatic poll monitors all components and objects in the system using a generic health associated with each. This generic health may be reflected up, for example, with the occurrence of a LIP F8, as described. The on-demand poll is used in more detailed or specific monitoring (Figure 14) and will be described in further detail hereinafter. The present invention also contemplates the use of automated diagnostics 330, as mentioned above with regard to event driven diagnostics.

35 Referring to Figure 18, the on-demand diagnostics operate first by detecting all ports in step 329 to determine which ordered sets are going past each port. In this way, a determination is made as to whether or not the loop is functional. More specifically, if OPNs, ARBs, and startup frames (SOF) are going past, these are valid, operational loop ordered sets. In contrast, if there are loop initialization primitives going around for longer than a very short period of time (e.g., a second would be a long time), the loop is stuck in initialization which will be reflected up through indications. Thus, in step 332, if LIP's occur for greater than some predetermined interval, health indication is changed in a "change health status" step 334 for display purposes. Other notification mechanisms may be provided, as well. In step 336, if LIP F8 is detected, step 338 changes the health status to the failure mode. While the present discussions are centered upon Fibre Channel, it is considered that the method of the present invention can be used in other systems. That is, the characteristics of the data in a particular system may allow provisions for the same sort of detection capability. For example, if detection were performed in other protocols such as in an Ethernet hub in the disclosed manner (at the bit level monitoring non-invasively at distributed points), it is submitted that this method is new.

45 As described above, IDLE characters are included in the monitored group of ordered sets. A discussion will now be provided as to a number of features that are available as a result of idle detection coupled with the overall

5 monitoring configuration of the present invention. Initially, it is noted that if an idle mode is present (i.e., idles are being passed around a loop by the stations connected therein) and a cable is cut, for example, to a node, that node or station will begin transmitting LIP F8. In accordance with the present invention, that node will automatically be bypassed such that the quiet state of the loop is restored. In another feature, the presence of essentially nothing but idles on a loop indicate that a loop is not being utilized. If a pattern develops, for example, every evening between 10
10 p.m. and 2 a.m. nothing but idles are seen, an opportunity is provided for performing activities such as backup. Thus, recommendations can be made for these quiet times to do batch processing so as to better utilize the data link. In still another feature, the reader is reminded of the foregoing discussion relating to detection of valid Fibre Channel characters. If a node starts corrupting IDLE characters, the present invention will detect the fact that these are not valid IDLE characters. In response, the node which is corrupting the IDLEs will automatically be bypassed. It should
15 be appreciated that this feature is highly advantageous. By proactively intervening upon detection of the corrupted IDLEs and, thereupon, disallowing the offending node from participating, there is no loss of actual data. Thereafter, a notification may be provided with regard to the occurrence of the corrupted IDLEs.

Attention is now directed to Figure 19 which illustrates a Fibre Channel system produced in accordance with the present invention, generally indicated by the reference number 350, for purposes of a discussion of topology mapping in accordance with the present invention. System 350 includes hubs H1 and H2 manufactured in
20 accordance with the present invention. Station S1 is connected to port P1 of H1 while station S2 is connected to port P2 of H2 and station S3 is connected to Port P3 of H2. Port P2 of H1 is connected to port P1 of H2 forming a hub to hub connection. It is assumed that ALPA 1 is assigned to S1, ALPA 2 is assigned to S2 and ALPA 3 is assigned to S3. It should be appreciated that ALPA detection can be applied, as described with regard to Figure 3, to determine which ALPA's are connected to each port. In the present example, ALPA mapping, in and of itself, will correctly
25 show that ALPA 1, or S1 is connected to P1 of H1. By running an ALPA map on H2 port 1 from H1 port 2, however, ALPA 2 and ALPA 3 (i.e., S2 and S3) will be seen as connected to H1 port 2. In this regard, it is apparent that ALPA mapping does not reveal devices that may be intermediately connected between the stations. Accordingly, it is an objective of the present invention to perform topology mapping identifying intermediately
30 connected devices. In one topology mapping feature, the present invention includes an arrangement for identifying hubs to other hubs such that, if two of these managed hubs are connected together, one hub will recognize that it has a managed hub connected to it and relay that information to a management application. Knowledge of the hub to hub connection will permit the correct locations of S1 and S2 to be identified. This feature is facilitated through identification/serial numbers that are built into the hubs.

35 The transmit disable feature described with regard to Figure 16 is highly advantageous for use in another topology mapping feature. Specifically, one method used in accordance with the present invention is to check response to the transmit disable feature. If an attachment is a station, it will respond with a LIP F8. In other words, receipt of LIP F8 in response to a transmit disable confirms the presence of a station on the particular lobe served by the disabled transmitter. If, however, a prior art hub rather than a station is on the particular lobe served, the hub will
40 not respond with LIP F8. Still another topology mapping feature is provided which is also submitted to be highly advantageous and which is designed for use with managed hubs in accordance with the present invention. In this feature, following an attachment request received by a managed hub, the managed hub will transmit a burst of LIP F7 to the requesting connection prior to insertion. If the attachment request is from a station, the station will respond to the burst with LIP F7 followed by a stream of IDLES for 15 milliseconds. During the 15 millisecond period, an
45 ARB FB is transmitted to the requesting connection. If the requesting connection is a station, the ARB FB will not return to the hub. Alternatively, if the connection is a hub, the ARB FB will return to the hub. In the event that the

5 S3 and S4 are connected to H2. Initially, it is assumed that the hubs are not connected such that two loops are operating separately. Thus, S1 and S2 may be assigned ALPA 2 and ALPA 1, respectively, on H1. At the same time, S3 and S4 may be assigned ALPA 1 and ALPA 2 on H2. Cascading itself is the process of connecting the hubs to one another via a connection path "A". Hot cascading denotes the fact that the separate loops are already active and the addressees (ALPA's) are already assigned on the separate loops present on H1 and H2. However, as is the case
10 here, it should be appreciated that the ALPA's may be the same for the stations on each loop. That is, both S2 and S3 are assigned ALPA 1 and both S1 and S4 are assigned ALPA 2. Therefore, closing connection A can have disastrous results unless special precautions are taken. For example, it is desirable to avoid events such as data intended for ALPA 2 on H2 to be written to ALPA 2 on H1. As another example, if S2 with ALPA 1 tries to send a command to ALPA 2 on H1 (i.e., S2), it can be seen that because of the direction of the loops the first station having ALPA 2 that
15 this data will encounter is S4 on H2. Thus, it should be assured that such events do not occur as a result of hot cascading. The present invention provides two methods for performing hot cascading, as will be described immediately hereinafter.

Referring to Figure 21 in conjunction with Figure 20, a first hot cascading method is generally indicated by the reference number 420. The basis of this method is to reset connection A from H2 prior to insertion and, hence, it
20 may be referred to as a "reset connection" method. Method 420 begins with step 422 in which H2 listens for valid input on Rx of its P3. Thereafter, in step 424, LIP F7 is transmitted from Tx of P3 on H2. When the LIP F7 returns to H2 at P3(Rx), it is known that the remote H1 loop has returned the LIP, is operating properly and, therefore, is in a position to reset. Step 426 is then entered in which the LIP F7 continues to be transmitted from P3(Tx) of H2 while listening on P1(Rx) of H2 for the LIP F7 to return. Following return of the LIP F7, in step 428, the LIP is released on
25 P3(Tx) of H2 and normal loop data is transmitted therefrom.

Referring to Figures 20 and 22, a second hot cascading method is generally indicated by the reference number 440. The basis of the second method is to reset H2 first and, hence, it may be referred to as a "self-reset" method. Method 440 begins with previously described steps 422 and 424. Following step 424, step 442 is performed in which LIP F7 is transmitted on P2(Tx) of H2 while listening for the LIP F7 at P1(Rx) of H2. As compared with
30 method 420, in this instance, the LIP is transmitted upstream from the new connection (i.e., connection A) so as to reset H2 prior to H1. Thereafter, in step 444, loop data is transmitted on P3(Tx) of H2 with P3(Rx) of H2 connected into the loop. That is, the new connection is allowed in while transmitting the LIP F7. Following step 444, step 446 transmits normal loop data on P2(Tx) of H2.

Referring to Figure 2, RDU 110 also utilizes methods for diagnosing system failures outside of hub 102. In
35 a first detection feature, the ability to detect a CRC (Cyclic Redundancy Code) error is included so as to detect a data frame with a bit error entering the hub. In addition, because the RDU identifies the error to a hub port, the error domain is visible and the administrator therefore knows which connection to explore. Therefore, this feature is useful to a system administrator in determining if stations are introducing errors. In a second detection feature, the RDU also captures the source address (ALPA) of the bad data frame. The ALPA information combined with the port
40 identification allows for further narrowing of the source of the error. Isolation of the error may be accomplished by identifying which ALPAs show errors and which do not. The boundary has a strong possibility of being the problem spot. In a third detection feature, invalid Fibre Channel Words are identified. This feature is useful in that invalid Fibre Channel Words are an indication of bit errors on a physical link both inside and outside data frames. An invalid word indication would occur if a bit error occurred between the last station and the RDU. This feature is
45 useful if a fiber, transmitter or receiver is intermittent. It should be appreciated that all of these detection mechanisms

5 ARB FB is returned, the hub will attempt to exchange serial number information via special ordered sets. If the attaching hub is another managed hub manufactured in accordance with the present invention, a serial number other than the first hub's will return. Conversely, if the attaching hub is an unmanaged hub, the serial number of the first hub will return. Therefore, one advantage of this feature is the capability to gather enough information to describe the sequence of connection of hubs by serial number. Once the sequence can be detected, it is also possible to
10 determine if hubs are connected improperly and report problems. It should be appreciated that a significant challenge for system administrators concerning complex configurations is to confirm that the wires/fibers got connected as intended. This level of topology mapping provides the needed feedback.

In sum, with regard to the topology mapping features described thus far, ALPA mapping allows determination of the ALPA's that are connected to a port. The transmit disable feature, in which the transmitter to
15 the connection is turned off before the connection is allowed on the loop, allows identification as to whether the device on the connection is a station or another hub. Identification of serial numbers of other hubs allows for locating managed hubs and providing their identification numbers.

Referring to Figure 3, it should be appreciated that hub 102 of the present invention is a repeated hub. Data comes into the hub serially and goes out serially with no delay or imperceptible delay. The hub of the present
20 invention may be an elastic device. This elasticity may be in either in the FDU or RDU 110. In this regard, an elastic FDU 108a is illustrated by a dashed line in a series connection with main loop 104. It is noted that RDU 110 may be elastic, as shown. Data comes into the hub serially, gets converted from serial to parallel, and then is clocked by a separate clock to retiming the data. It should be appreciated that the hub of the present invention should be elastic because, depending on the difference between the incoming clock and the local clock, the hub may have to either
25 insert words or delete words. The term elasticity describes absorbing the difference between the clock signals, retiming the data and resetting the jitter to zero. More importantly, what is added is the ability in the hub to insert ordered sets or frames into the data stream and then also remove the inserted data from the data stream without interrupting the normal flow of data. For example, an ordered set can be inserted onto the loop which then can go through a number of devices and come back to the hub to then be removed such that the inserted ordered set does not
30 continue to circulate. Since a request is inserted, it can also be established when the request returns to the hub. Therefore, by observing such a request on one lobe using the RDU, it can be determined what is connected on the lobe as well as the length of the connection since the delay in return can be timed.

Referring to Figure 19, as previously discussed, ALPA mapping using OPN's allows for locating devices that are quiescent. In other words, locating devices that are not open and are not arbitrating for the loop. For
35 example, if S1 is quiescent, it will not send out ARB's or be opened by another device. Therefore, an ALPA map based on active devices will not see S1. The proactive approach of the present invention permits sending out queries to any station to elicit a response, whether the station is active or not, in performing topology mapping. As mentioned, in order to insert and remove these queries, elasticity is provided within the hub with the additional benefits of retiming the data and resetting the jitter to zero. For example, in Figure 3, elastic FDU 108a retimes data
40 and resets jitter between PCC1 and PCC2.

Attention is now directed to Figure 20 for purposes of a discussion of hot cascading performed in accordance with the present invention. Figure 20 illustrates a system manufactured in accordance with the present invention and generally indicated by the reference number 400. System 400 includes hubs H1 and H2 wherein at least H2 is produced in accordance with the present invention. Stations S1 and S2 are connected to H1 while stations

- 5 can be collected and displayed in a persistent mode to allow capturing and displaying occurrences that are very low in frequency. A real time display would blink on and off so quickly as to be invisible to the administrator.

Using the specification to this point and Figures 2-22, it is considered that one of ordinary skill in the art may readily practice the present invention in view of the teachings therein. However, for further explanatory purposes, the various configurations and methods disclosed thus far will be described in more detail in conjunction with Figures 23-34. It is noted that the term Wizard refers to a hub manufactured in accordance with the present invention, while the terms Apprentice and Magician refer to management method configurations operating in accordance with the present invention. Immediately hereinafter, a description will be provided of an embodiment of a Port Control Integrated Circuit (PCC) manufactured in accordance with the present invention and suitable for use in PCC embodiments of the invention described above. Thereafter, documentation will be provided with regard to management including specific display provisions.

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this description is to define the electrical, mechanical and environmental requirements for a Fiber Channel FC-AL Hub Integrated Circuit.

2.0 Scope

20 This description is limited to the definition of the requirements of the Integrated Circuit specified herein and to no other Integrated Circuit.

3.0 Applicable Documents/References

25 ANSI X3.272 - 199x Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop
X3T11/Project 960D/ Interface (FC-AL)
Rev. 4.5
TR ANSI X3.XXX- 199x Fibre Channel- Methodologies for Jitter Specification
Rev. 1.0 Draft F draft Proposed X3 Technical Report (Jitter Working Group)

4.0 ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS

Table 4.1 Absolute Maximum Ratings

30 (VEEE, VEET, VEEG, VEEP = GND)

Symbol	Description	Min.	Typ	Max.	Unit	Comment
Vcc	Power supply voltage	-0.3		4	V	
VI T	TTL DC input voltage	-0.5		5.5	V	
VI E	ECL DC input voltage	Vcc-2		Vcc	V	
II E	ECL input voltage between differential signal	-2		2	V	
IOH T	TTL output current (High)	-20		0	mA	
IOL T	TTL output current (Low)	0		20	mA	
IO E	ECL output current	-30		0	mA	
Ta	Ambient temperature	-55		70	C	Under bias
Tstg	Storage temperature	-65		150	C	

Table 4.2 Recommended Operating Conditions

Symbol	Description	Min.	Typ.	Max.	Unit	Comment
Vcc	Power supply voltage	3.135	3.3	3.465	V	3.3V + 5%
Ta	Ambient temperature	0		70	C	

5

Table 4.3 DC Characteristics (over recommended operating conditions)

Symbol	Description	Min.	Typ.	Max.	Unit	Condition
VIH T	Input HIGH voltage (TTL)	2		5.5	V	
VIL T	Input LOW voltage (TTL)	0		0.8	V	
I _{IH} T	Input HIGH current (TTL)			20	μA	V _{in} = V _{cc}
I _{IL} T	Input LOW current (TTL)	-400			μA	V _{in} = 0
VOH T	Output HIGH voltage (TTL)	2.2		V _{cc}	V	I _{OH} = -0.4 mA
VOL T	Output LOW voltage (TTL)			0.5	V	I _{OL} = 2 mA
VIH E	Input HIGH voltage (ECL)	V _{cc} -1.17		V _{cc} -0.88	V	
VIL E	Input LOW voltage (ECL)	V _{cc} -1.81		V _{cc} -1.48	V	
VIS_E	Differential input voltage swing (ECL)	200		1000	mV	AC coupled
VOH E	Output HIGH voltage (ECL)	V _{cc} -1.05		V _{cc} -0.81	V	50 ohm to V _{cc} -2V
VOL E	Output LOW voltage (ECL)	V _{cc} -1.81		V _{cc} -1.55	V	50 ohm to V _{cc} -2V
I _{cc}	Supply current		123	154	mA	Outputs open
P _d	Power dissipation		406	534	mW	Outputs open

Table 4.4 AC Characteristics (over recommended operating conditions)

See also Figure 4.

Symbol	Description	Min	Typ.	Max.	Unit	Conditions
T _{ir} RC	Input TTL rise time of REFCLK			4.8	ns	0.8V to 2.0V
T _{if} RC	Input TTL fall time of REFCLK			4.8	ns	2.0V to 0.8V
T _{or} T	Output TTL rise time			3.5	ns	0.8V to 2.0V, CL=10pf
T _{of} T	Output TTL fall time			3.5	ns	2.0V to 0.8V, CL=10pf
T _{or} E	Output ECL rise time			400	ps	20% to 80%, CL=2pf
T _{of} E	Output ECL fall time			400	ps	20% to 80%, CL=2pf
SDR	Serial Data Rate		1062.5		MBd	1.0 UI = 941 ps
RC TOL	REFCLK Frequency Tolerance			100	PPM	53.125 MHz REFCLK
RC DC	REFCLK Duty Cycle Tolerance			10	%	
X T _{JT}	Total Jitter Tolerance, pk-pk, 10 ⁻¹² BER	0.7			UI	T _{JT} =FD _{JT} +D _{JT} +R _{JT}
X FD _{JT}	Frequency Dependent Jitter Tolerance, pk-pk, 10 ⁻¹² BER	0.1			UI	LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf, Note 1
X D _{JT}	Deterministic Jitter Tolerance, pk-pk, 10 ⁻¹² BER			0.38	UI	LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf, Note 1
X R _{JT}	Random Jitter Tolerance, pk-pk, 10 ⁻¹² BER			0.22	UI	LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf, Note 1
X DJ _{out}	Deterministic Jitter Output, pk-pk		0.02	0.07	UI	± K28.5 serial data, 637 KHz HPF, LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf
X RJ _{out}	Random Jitter Output, rms		0.010	0.011	UI rms	00110011 serial data, 637 KHz HPF, LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf
X 8CRJ _{out}	Accumulated Random Jitter Output, rms, 8 Cascaded ICs (Port_in to Loop_out)		0.011	0.0125	UI rms	00110011 serial data, 637 KHz HPF, LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf
X JXFR_P _K	Jitter Transfer Peaking			0.2	dB	00110011 Input, LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf
X JXFR_3dB	Jitter Transfer 3 dB Bandwidth	650		850	KHz	00110011 input, LPF R/2=62 ohm, C=0.1 uf
X T _{bs}	Bit Sync Time			2500	bit	FC IDLE Pattern
X T _{fa}	Frequency Acquisition Time			2000	usec	LPF C = 0.1 uf
X LDR	Lock Detect Range	-2		+2	%	Frequency Difference Between Recovered Clock and Refclk
X	PLL Lock Operation		Auto			Note 2

Note 1: Fibre Channel Jitter Tolerance Mask from Jitter Working Group (see section 3.0).

Note 2: Autolock operation desired, but Jitter performance and Locking behavior is more important.

5

Table 4.5 Function of LOOP_OUT (see also Figure 4)

LOOP SELN	LOOP OUT
H	Recovered Data
L	LOOP IN

Table 4.6 Function of DIAG_OUT (see also Figure 4)

DIAG SELN	DIAG OUT
H	Recovered Data
L	DIAG IN

Table 4.7 Function of PORT_OUT (see also Figure 4)

PORT SEL0N	PORT SEL1N	PORT OUT
H	H	Low
L	H	Recovered Data
H	L	DIAG IN
L	L	LOOP IN

10

Table 4.8 Function of Recoverd Data (see also Figure 4)

PORT SEL0N	PORT SEL1N	CDR SELN	Recoverd Data
H	H	H	Low
L	H	H	-
H	L	H	DIAG IN
L	L	H	LOOP IN
H	H	L	PORT IN
L	H	L	PORT IN
H	L	L	PORT IN
L	L	L	PORT IN

4.9 Selection of Signal

(Note: for Selection of Signal see Table 1 above)

15

5 5.0 MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS

5.1 Pin Description (see also Figure 4)

Name	Pin No.	Type	Description
X REFCLK	1	I_TTL	Reference Clock: When LKREFN is Low or CDR input frequency is unlocked, PLL locks to REFCLK
LKDT	2	O_TTL	PLL Lock Detector: When PLL doesn't lock, it is Low
VEET	3	PS	Ground for TTL I/O: 0 V.
DIAG_IN	4	I_ECL (Diff)	Serial data output. (See Figure 1).
DIAG_INN	5		
VCCE	6	PS	Power Supply for ECL I/O: 3.3 V \pm 5%
LOOP_IN	7	I_ECL (Diff)	Serial data input. (See Figure 1).
LOOP_INN	8		
VEEG	9	PS	Ground for internal logic gate: 0 V.
PORT_IN	10	I_ECL (Diff)	Serial data input. (See Figure 1).
PORT_INN	11		
LKREFN	12	I_TTL	Lock to Reference. An active Low input, LKREFN Causes the PLL lock to the REFCLK
VEEP	13	PS	Ground for PLL: 0 V.
LPF1	14	EX	Connect to external Loop Filter.
LPF2	15	EX	Connect to external Loop Filter.
VCCP	16	PS	Power supply for PLL: 3.3 V \pm 5%.
PORT_SEL1N	17	I_TTL	Selection for PORT_OUT. (See Table 1)
PORT_SEL0N	18		
VEEE	19	PS	Ground for ECL I/O: 0 V.
PORT_OUTN	20	O_ECL (Diff)	Serial data output. (See Figure 1).
PORT_OUT	21		
VCCE	22	PS	Power supply for ECL I/O: 3.3 V \pm 5%.
LOOP_OUTN	23	O_ECL (Diff)	Serial data output. (See Figure 1).
LOOP_OUT	24		
VCCG	25	PS	Power supply for internal logic gates: 3.3 V \pm 5%.
DIAG_INN	26	I_ECL (Diff)	Serial data input. (See Figure 1).
DIAG_IN	27		
LOOP_SELN	28	I_TTL	Selection for LOOP_OUT. (See Table 1).
DIAG_SELN	29	I_TTL	Selection for DIAG_OUT. (See Table 1).
CDR_SELN	30	I_TTL	When Low, PORT_IN is selected for CDR.

Notes: See Figure 23 which illustrates an integrated port control circuit manufactured in accordance with the present invention and generally indicated by the reference number 460.

X left of table indicates that this is different or not included in preliminary spec.

Table 5.2 Pin Type Definition

Type	Definition
PS	Power supply or ground.
I_TTL	Input TTL
O_TTL	Output TTL
I_ECL	Input ECL
O_ECL	Output ECL
EX	External circuit node.

15 6. GUI REQUIREMENTS

The primary purpose of the GUI is to enable the user to easily configure and manage one or many stacks. This functionality breaks down into two general categories, multiple stack (device) management and problem (fault) detection and isolation. The device management is focused on viewing the status and controlling physical devices and fault management is focused on viewing the current state of a loop and the connections to it. In managing the

stacks there is a natural hierarchy: stacks, mgmt, hubs, ports. In problem detection and isolation information for loop states the hierarchy is: loops, mgmt, hubs, ports. The GUI will present these "cuts" or views into the data.

The overall requirements of the GUI are:

- GUI must be intuitive, easy to use, and useful
 - Help system
- Multiple Stack device management - ability to view ID, status and controls for any manageable item
 - Site view
 - Single stack view
 - Mgmt view
 - Hub view
 - Port view
- Problem detection and isolation - ability to view how stacks and loops are connected and health information
 - Site view
 - Single loop view
 - Mgmt view
 - Hub view
 - Port view
- Must provide an Ethernet SNMP interface
- Must be localizable
- Must interface with Apprentice
- Must provide event logging

6.1 SITE VIEW

This view will present all active Mgmt cards and all loops associated with each card which will give the user a one screen presentation of the health of all managed stacks and their loops. Since, each managed stack must contain at least one management card and only one card can be active within a management stack, the highest level view will present the active card within each stack and each card presented in this view will be indicative of the worst state of the corresponding stack of hubs. In the same respect, the loops displayed will be presented in a way to reflect their current state (active, should investigate, down). The user needs the ability to display and modify identifying information for both stacks and loops.

The requirements for this view are:

- Display all manageable/monitorable items
 - stacks
 - loops
- Identification of all manageable stacks by active mgmt card
 - IP
 - MAC
 - domain name
 - user supplied name
- Show worst case state (active, should investigate, down) of all manageable stacks
- Indicate number of hubs in each stack
- Ability to drill-down on any active Mgmt card for more information on the stack
- Show monitorable loops in each stack
- Identification of all monitorable loops
 - user supplied name
- Show current state (active, should investigate, down) of all monitorable loops
- Indicate number of nodes on loop

- Ability to drill-down on any loop for more loop information

Some future requirements are:

- Indicate primary In-band management links
*NOT just using thickness of connection
- Indicate secondary In-band management links
- Display In-band Magician management stations
- Future devices

6.2 Single Stack View

This view will show all the hubs in a selected stack but will not necessarily reflect the physical ordering of the hubs. This logical stack configuration will show any cascaded hubs and their associated ports within the stack. Cascading of the hubs allows multiple hubs access to the same loop and within a stack of hubs, it is possible to have one or more loops configured in the stack. Each port on a hub can be attached to a node, a loop of nodes such as a JBOD, or an unmanaged hub.

The requirements for this view are:

- Display manageable hubs in stack selected
- Indicate which hub has the active Mgmt card
- Show worst case state of ports for each displayed hub
- Display identification of each hub
 - serial #
- Indicate presence of Mgmt card in any hub, active or slave
- Display identification of all Mgmt cards present
 - MAC
 - IP
 - user supplied name
- Show hub cascades
- Indicate connections outside of managed stack
 - If another hub, allow drill-down of stack
 - Clouds = other things with >1 ALPA

6.3 LOOP VIEW

Within a loop, it is possible to have one or more stacks configured in the loop. Each port on a hub can be used to attach another hub, cascaded, into a single loop or each hub can be its own isolated loop or any other combination of hub connections as long as there is no more than one loop per hub. Each port on a hub can also be attached to an unmanaged device such as a JBOD. This view will show the logical managed loop topology of the selected loop.

The requirements for this view are:

- Show all manageable/known? items in loop selected
 - hubs
 - clouds = JBOD, rest of loop, other things with >1 ALPA
 - label unmanaged hub cloud?
- Indicate which hub has the active Mgmt card
- Show worst case state of ports for each displayed hub
- Display identification of each hub
 - serial #
- Indicate presence of Mgmt card in any hub, active or slave
- Display identification of all Mgmt cards present
 - MAC
 - IP

- name
- Display any loop info available
 - throughput
 - # of link up/link down
 - # of ARBs
 - registration
- Display node info per port
 - ALPA list
 - user supplied name
 - user supplied WWN
 - user supplied device type
 - user supplied manufacturer
 - user supplied location

6.4 MGMT CARD VIEW

This view should give all pertinent info for a selected management card and provide mechanisms to modify the configuration of the selected Mgmt card.

The requirements for this view are:

- Display Mgmt card identification information
 - MAC
 - IP
 - HW revision
 - FW revision
- Indicate state of Mgmt card
- Allow user to force this Mgmt card to be active

6.5 HUB VIEW

This view will provide status and control information about each hub in a managed stack or loop and will provide mechanisms to modify the configuration of each hub.

The requirements for this view are:

- Display manageable hub features intuitively
- Indicate port status of all ports using color
- Show LED states and interpret
 - port
 - management
 - management card present
 - management card OK
 - management card master
 - Ethernet activity
 - enclosure monitoring/system
 - power supply status
 - loop up
 - enclosure fault
 - uC fault
 - Display type of GBIC or none per port
 - Display Mgmt card if present and identify
 - MAC
 - IP
 - name
- Display serial # of hub
- Allow multiple port views to be displayed
- Display node info per port
 - ALPA list

- user supplied name
- user supplied WWN
- user supplied device type
- user supplied manufacturer
- user supplied location

6.6 PORT VIEW

This view will allow the user to access all manageable features at the port level.

The requirements for this view are:

- port control
 - enable auto insert/bypass if detect fault - loss of signal, loss of lock or transmitter fault (default)
 - OR
 - force loop bypass
 - force external loopback, will force loop bypass
 - OR
 - force insertion on loop
- port status
 - port control state
 - enable auto insert/bypass
 - force bypass
 - external loopback
 - force insert into loop
- port module ID copper/fiber(SW,LW) 3 bit GBIC spec id.

Table 6.6-1

Bits 2:0	Definition
111	No Module Present
110	Copper Module, DB-9 Connector
101	Copper Module, HSSDC Connector
100	Long-wave Laser
011	Serial Interface Protocol
010	Short-wave Laser
001	To Be Defined
000	Gigabit Ethernet

- port active = signal detected

Table 6.6-2

Logic Inputs			GBIC Status	Link_Flt	
Mod Pres	TX Fault	Rx signal	Green	Amber	Description
F	X	X	OFF	OFF	Module not inserted
T	T	X	OFF	ON	Faulty Module
T	F	F	ON	ON	Module OK; Missing or Corrupt Data
T	F	T	ON	OFF	Normal Operation

- port state (loop inserted, bypassed, stuck in PLL)
- type of port connection, hub/node attached

7. GUI DESIGN

The goal of the GUI is to present this functionality in an intuitive and user-friendly package. The primary techniques that will be employed in accomplishing this goal are:

- a hierarchical presentation with drill-down capabilities
starting with the stack manager at the highest level and drilling down to the individual port level
- logical topologies using icons that are easily identifiable
- color coding to indicate health for quick problem detection and isolation
 - gray = unused
 - green = everything is functional
 - yellow = needs attention (should be investigated)
 - red = failure
- user labeling of all devices
- readily available "how-to use this window" information
- a consistent window interface
 - flyover with high-level info on item
 - single click = more detailed info on item
 - double click = drill-down if available
 - a "How to use this window" button
 - a "Text/GUI" display toggle button
- comprehensive Help system
- cursor indication of selectable items

The major design divisions in the application are as follows:

- Views
- Data Objects
- Data Acquirement
- Health Determination
- Management API
- Mgmt API/SNMP mapping wrappers
- SNMP Interface
- Internationalization/Localizability
- Event Log

7.1 VIEWS

There are natural partitions in the information we want to present. The device management is focused on physical devices and the problem detection and isolation is focused on the current state of a loop and the connections to it. In presenting the manageable stacks there is a natural hierarchy: stacks, Mgmt cards, hubs, ports. In presenting information for loop states the hierarchy is: loops, Mgmt cards, hubs, ports.

The proposed hierarchical presentation will drill-down as follows:

- Site view - all manageable stacks and loops
 - Single Stack view
 - Mgmt card view
 - Back of box view
 - Mgmt card view
 - Port detail view
 - Hardware debug view
 - Loop view
 - Mgmt card view
 - Back of box view
 - Mgmt card view
 - Port detail view
 - Hardware debug view

5 The hierarchical presentation will drill-down graphically, as depicted in Figure 24 by a diagram that is generally indicated by the reference number 480. Magician will display status and control information about each hub in a managed stack or loop by clicking on a hub from the Stack View (see Figure 11) or Loop view (see Figure 25) and will provide mechanisms to modify the configuration of each hub.

10 A polling or change mechanism will be required to keep the views in sync with the data. For Apprentice, a simple redraw of objects will be used. It still needs to be determined the extent of change management that should be implemented for Magician.

7.1.3 LOOP VIEW

15 Referring to Figure 25, a Loop View is generally indicated by the reference number 500. The Loop View will be a tree structure type view. It is intended that the user will be able to "build their own loops" by dragging and dropping hubs into a loop root.

7.1.4 HUB VIEW

 Figure 26 is similar to previously described Figure 12, however, Figure 26 illustrates another Hub View for Stack 2, Hub 1 generally indicated by the reference number 520. Figure 27 illustrates still another Hub View for Stack 2, Hub 3 generally indicated by the reference number 540.

20 7.1.5 MGMT VIEW

 Figure 28 illustrates a management view generally indicated by the reference number 560.

7.1.7 HARDWARE DEBUG

 Figure 29 illustrates a first hardware debug view which is generally indicated by the reference number 580. In this view, a "Ports" tab 582 has been selected.

25 Figure 30 illustrates hardware debug view 580 with a "Hub" tab 584 selected.

 Figure 31 illustrates hardware debug view 580 with a "Loop" tab 586 selected.

 Figure 32 illustrates hardware debug view 580 with a "Stack" tab 586 selected.

 Figure 33 illustrates hardware debug view 580 with an "Agent" tab 588 selected.

30 It is noted that the "Detect" tab in Figures 29-33 has been replaced by a "Sweep" tab having the same functionality. Selection of this sweep tab brings up Hub Sweep View 260 of Figure 14, described above.

7.2 DATA OBJECTS

35 There is also a natural hierarchy of objects in the system we will be handling. The primary objects identified are:

- lobes: loop nodes, hubs, clouds
- ports
- mgmt cards
- hubs

- stacks = active mgmt cards
- loops
- site

Referring to Figure 34, a data object composition chart is generally indicated by the reference number 600. Each object identified has state and control information associated with it. The state information maps into Visual Basic properties and the controls map into Visual Basic methods as follows:

- **Cloud**
Properties/val Types/
 ALPAs
 Graphic
- **Node**
Properties/val Types/
 Name
 WWW
 Location
 DeviceType
 Manufacturer
 Graphic
- **Lobe**
Properties/val Types/
 Length
 Type [none, unknown, node, hub]
 ID
 ConnectObject
- **Port**
Properties/val Types/
 ControlState[auto, bypass, extloopback, insert]
 BeaconState [Boolean]
 TransmitterState [Boolean]
 ModuleID [GbEther, TBD, LaserSW, Serial, LaserLW, CopperHSSDC, CopperD9, NoModule]
 GBICLED [Boolean]
 FaultLED [On, Off, Blink]
 State [inserted, bypassed, TxFault]
 PllLock[True, False]
 LobeObject
 Utilization
 FailoverPort
 TimesInserted
 Health
 DeviceID
 Graphic
Methods(args)
 Beacon (Boolean)
 Control (Auto, Bypass, Loopback, Insert)
 Transmitter (Boolean)
 FailoverPortSet
 UpdateInfo
 GetHealth
 SetVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
 RecvVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
 Class_Initialize
- **Mgmt**
Properties/val Types/
 State [active, passive, maintenance, unknown]
 FailoverPriority[0..7]
 MAC
 IP
 SelftestOK [Boolean]
 HardwareVersion

```

5      FirmwareVersion
      LanActivity [Boolean]
      EventLog
      Password
10     SyslogHost
      Name
      Health
      DeviceID
      Graphic
      Methods(args)
15     FailoverPrioritySet
      PasswordSet
      IpSet
      ForceActive
      EventFilter
20     SyslogHostSet
      Reset
      UpdateInfo
      GetHealth
      SetVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
25     RecvVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
      Class_Initialize
      • Hub
        Properties/val Types/
30     FanFault [Boolean]
      TempFault [Boolean]
      PowerFault [Boolean]
      uCFault [Boolean]
      SerialNumber
      Family
35     HWType
      NumPorts
      FWVersion
      ManagementPresent [Boolean]
      DiagPort
40     PortsObject
      MgmtObject
      LoopObject
      Health
      DeviceID
45     Graphic
      Methods(args)
      DiagnosPort
      Reset(I2C, ports)
      UpdateInfo
50     GetHealth
      SetVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
      RecvVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
      Class_Initialize
      • Loop
55     Properties/val Types/
      ID
      State [initializing, open-init, loop up, loop active]
      ALPAs
      UpTime
60     TimesReset
      Utilization
      HubsObject
      Health
      DeviceID
65     Graphic
      Methods(args)
      Reset
      UpdateInfo

```

```

5      GetHealth
      SetVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
      RecvVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
      Class_Initialize
10      • Stack
        Properties/val Types/
          ID
          HubsObject
          LoopsObject
          Health
15      DeviceID
          Graphic
        Methods(args)
          Reset
          UpdateInfo
20      GetHealth
          SetVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
          RecvVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
          Class_Initialize
25      • Site
        Properties/val Types/
          EventLog
          AgentsObject
          StacksObject
          Icon
30      Health
          DeviceID
          Graphic
        Methods(args)
          UpdateInfo
35      GetHealth
          SetVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
          RecvVars(deviceID, vars, vals)
          Class_Initialize

```

40 7.3 DATA ACQUISITION

A polling mechanism will be employed to obtain current relevant information, which will update the information available for each object. The attributes of the poll mechanism are:

```

Poll Interval
    1 min = Default
45 This should be user adjustable.

```

Amount of data acquired:

- Apprentice only requires a simple "poll all" mechanism,
 - Magician might need a more intelligent poll using the event log as a back-off
- 50 mechanism due to too high of IP loading for a complete data poll on every poll interval. The back-off mechanism will be further defined when the event log definition is stable. The preliminary algorithm concept is:

```

⇒ request active mgmt ID info from all communicating mgmt cards (active or passive)
⇒ request ALL info from active mgmt cards
   active mgmt = stack
⇒ poll event logs from all active mgmt cards
⇒ if change in event log
   get pertinent data

```

- Another option for minimizing the impact of the poll mechanism is to break requests
- 60 into chunks instead of requesting all data at once.

5

Type of poll

- Apprentice will have a blocking poll
- Magician will have an asynchronous poll provided by the PowerTCP SNMP package

10

The functionality will be implemented by using Timer objects. The ability to refresh object information will be provided consistently and generically by each object having its own UpdateInfo method.

7.4 HEALTH DETERMINATION

Here is the color coding map to indicate health for problem detection and isolation

15

gray= Unused
 green = everything is Functional
 yellow = needs Attention (should be investigated)
 red = Failure

20

Each of the following objects will have a health indicator that will have an affect on the next level object above it.

25

- **ports**

Unused

Default

Functional

GBICLED = on & FaultLED = off

Attention

ControlState != auto

State = bypassed

Failure

ModuleID != NoModule & GBICLED = off

TransmitterState = off

FaultLED = on

ControlState = insert & State != inserted

30

35

- **mgmt (must be present)**

Unused

State = passive

Functional

State = active & SelftestOK = true & LanActivity = true

Attention

State = maintenance

State != active & LanActivity = false

Failure

State = unknown

SelftestOK = false

State = active & LanActivity = false

45

50

- **hubs**

Unused

Never

Functional

Default

Attention

mgmt.health = attention | ports.health = attention

Failure

mgmt.health = failure | port.health = failure

FanFault = true

TempFault = true

PowerFault = true

uCFault = true

55

60

- **loops**

Unused

Never

```

5           Functional
           Attention
           Failure
           State != loopUp|loopActive
10      •   stacks
           Unused
           Never
           Functional
           Default
           Attention
           hubs.health = attention
15      Failure
           hubs.health = failure
      •   site
           Unused
           Never
           Functional
           Default
           Attention
           hubs.health = attention | loops.health = attention
25      Failure
           hubs.health = failure | loops.health = failure

```

This functionality will be consistently and generically implemented by each object having its own GetHealth method.

One skilled in the art may devise many alternative configurations for the systems and methods disclosed herein. Therefore, it should be understood that the present invention may be embodied in many other specific forms without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention and that the present examples and methods are to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive, and the invention is not to be limited to the details given herein, but may be modified within the scope of the appended claims.

5 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a hub configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations based on operational status of the system, the improvement comprising:
an arrangement forming part of the hub and connectable at points within the hub and between at least two different pairs of the stations for monitoring certain characteristics of said data in a way which provides for non-invasive identification of one or more conditions related to the operational status of the system.
- 10 2. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said arrangement monitors said certain characteristics of said digital data using ordered set detection.
3. The improvement according to Claim 2 wherein said arrangement is configured for detecting a group of ordered sets including the idle character, LIP, LIP F7, LIP F8, SOF, ARB and OPN.
- 15 4. The improvement according to Claim 2 wherein said arrangement includes a counter configured for counting the occurrence of a specified ordered set at any one of said points.
5. The improvement according to Claim 2 wherein said system is a Fibre Channel system and wherein said arrangement is configured for detection of any station transmitting a LIP F8 ordered set.
- 20 6. The improvement according to Claim 5 wherein said system is configured for bypassing each of said stations individually and wherein said arrangement initiates bypass of any station transmitting LIP F8.
7. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said data flows between the stations using a loop which interconnects the stations so as to define said points and wherein said arrangement includes means for generating certain ordered sets to be introduced to the loop.
- 25 8. The improvement according to Claim 7 wherein said certain ordered sets are configured for diagnostic purposes.
9. The improvement according to Claim 7 wherein said means for generating the certain ordered sets to be introduced to the loop is further configured for removing the certain ordered sets from the loop.
- 30 10. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said points are defined as part of a Fibre Channel loop extending between the stations on which operations are implemented using ordered sets and wherein said arrangement is configured for detecting a specific predetermined sequence of ordered sets which specific predetermined sequence is indicative of a series of operational states of the loop and for indicating a current one of the operational states of the loop.
11. The improvement according to Claim 10 wherein the current operational state is indicated on said hub.
- 35 12. The improvement according to Claim 10 wherein the series of operational states of the loop normally proceeds at startup or re-start from INOPERATIVE to INITIALIZING to OPEN-INIT to UP to UP+FRAME serving as said specific predetermined sequence of operational states.

5 13. The improvement according to Claim 12 wherein loop initialization is indicated by a LIP ordered set and wherein said INITIALIZING state is entered upon detecting the LIP F7 ordered set.

 14. The improvement according to Claim 12 wherein said OPEN-INIT state is entered upon detecting a LIP ordered set followed by an ARB ordered set.

10 15. The improvement according to Claim 12 wherein said UP state is entered upon detecting a LIP ordered set followed by an ARB ordered set followed by a CLS ordered set.

 16. The improvement according to Claim 12 wherein said UP+FRAME state is entered upon detecting a LIP ordered set followed by an ARB ordered set followed by a CLS ordered set followed by an SOF ordered set.

15 17. The improvement according to Claim 12 wherein said arrangement includes means for indicating that said loop is operational and wherein said loop is indicated as being operational in the UP and/or UP+FRAMES states.

 18. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said data flows between the stations using a loop which interconnects the stations so as to define said points and said condition is a defect within the system and wherein said arrangement is configured for monitoring certain characteristics of said data at said points in a way which provides for non-invasive location of the defect.

20 19. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said data flows between the stations using a loop which interconnects the stations so as to define said points and wherein said arrangement is configured for connection to said points in a sequential manner such that only one of said points is monitored at a time.

 20. The improvement according to Claim 19 wherein said arrangement alternates from one of said points to a next one of said points at a predetermined interval.

25 21. The improvement according to Claim 19 wherein said arrangement is configured for monitoring two or more of said points at a time.

 22. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said data flows between the stations using a loop which interconnects the stations so as to define said points and wherein said hub is configured for interconnection of said stations using a series of ports, each one of said stations being physically receivable in one of the ports, said ports being interfaced with said loop such that, each station after initially having been received in one port, is insertable in the loop via by the port so as to cause said digital data to flow through the station and such that each one of the stations is selectively and individually bypassable with respect to the loop while the station is received in one of the ports to prevent said digital data from flowing through each of the stations and wherein said arrangement is configured for initially maintaining a connecting station, initially received in one of the ports and which may be defective, in a bypassed condition while verification of certain aspects of the operation of the station are performed such that insertion of the connecting station in the loop is prevented if the connecting station is defective.

 23. The improvement according to Claim 22 wherein said arrangement verifies the operation of the connecting station by transmitting test data to the connecting station while bypassed and, thereafter, observes the response of the connecting station to the test data.

5 24. The improvement according to Claim 23 wherein the loop is a Fibre Channel loop and said arrangement transmits LIP F7 to the connecting station as test data while bypassed.

 25. The improvement according to Claim 22 wherein said certain aspects of the operation of said stations include validation of data and loop attributes.

10 26. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said digital data flows between the stations using a main loop which interconnects the stations so as to define said points and wherein said arrangement includes analysis means for analyzing the digital data obtained at said points in order to establish those certain characteristics of interest.

 27. The improvement according to Claim 26 wherein said analysis means includes means for verification of Fibre Channel compliance.

15 28. The improvement according to Claim 26 wherein said arrangement includes a diagnostics loop separate from the main loop and connected between the stations and with said analysis means, said diagnostics loop being configured for selectively copying the digital data from one of said points on the main loop at a time and, thereafter, for transmitting the copied digital data to said analysis means.

20 29. The improvement according to Claim 28 wherein said main loop carries the digital data in one direction between the stations and wherein the diagnostics loop carries the copied digital data in an opposing direction between the stations with respect to the digital data carried on the main loop.

25 30. The improvement according to Claim 28 wherein said analysis arrangement is configured for generating test data for testing a selected one of the stations such that the selected station, if operating properly, will respond in a predetermined way to the test data and said diagnostics loop is configured for carrying the test data to the selected one of the stations along one segment of the diagnostics loop extending from the analysis means to the selected station and for carrying the response of the selected station to the test data on another segment of the diagnostics loop extending from the selected station to the analysis means.

30 31. The improvement according to Claim 30 wherein the hub includes means for bypassing each of the stations with respect to the main loop and wherein said analysis arrangement cooperates with said diagnostics loop to transmit the test data to the selected station while the selected station is bypassed so as to observe the response of the selected station without affecting the operation of any stations continuing to use the main loop.

35 32. The improvement according to Claim 30 wherein said hub is configured for interconnection of said stations using a series of ports, said ports being interfaced with said loop such that each one of said stations is initially inserted into one of the ports and the inserted station is then selectively connectable with the loop using said bypass means to cause said digital data to flow through the inserted station with respect to the loop and selectively bypassable with respect to the loop to prevent said digital data from flowing through the inserted station and wherein said analysis arrangement cooperates with said diagnostics loop and said bypass means to initially hold an inserted station in a bypassed condition prior to connection with the loop until such time that the test data is transmitted to the inserted station and the predetermined response of the inserted station is observed by the analysis means via the
40 diagnostics loop without affecting operation of other stations already using the main loop.

5 33. The improvement according to Claim 1 including beaconing means for providing a beacon indication in a way which identifies a location associated with a particular one of said conditions.

 34. The improvement according to Claim 33 wherein said hub includes a series of ports such that each port connects one of the stations to the hub and, when said condition is a defect associated with a particular station, the location at which the beacon indication is provided is on said hub adjacent to the one of said ports to which the particular station is connected.

10 35. The improvement according to Claim 33 wherein said beacon indication is provided at a position remote from said hub.

 36. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said hub is a Fibre Channel hub such that data frames pass through said hub, at least some of said data frames being subject to corruption within the system, and each data frame including a CRC for use in identifying corrupted data frames, and wherein said arrangement is configured for checking the CRC's of data frames passing through said points in a way which identifies corrupted ones of the data frames.

15 37. The improvement according to Claim 36 wherein said arrangement is configured for examining the CRC's of data frames at each of said points in a way which isolates the corrupted frames to origination at a certain one of said points.

20 38. The improvement according to Claim 36 wherein each data frame includes a source ALPA and wherein said arrangement is further configured for capturing the source ALPA of each of the corrupted ones of the data frames.

 39. The improvement according to Claim 38 wherein said hub is configured for interconnection of said stations in a main loop using a series of ports such that one or more of said stations may be serially connected to each of the ports, with the station or stations connected to each of the ports of the hub forming a lobe of the main loop and wherein said arrangement uses the captured source ALPA's of corrupted ones of the data frames in a way which indicates a particular station which is serially connected with at least one other station in one lobe of the main loop as a probable cause of the corrupted data frames.

25 40. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said hub is a Fibre Channel hub such that said digital data passes through said hub, which digital data is subject to corruption within the system so as to violate a predefined transition density and wherein said arrangement is configured for identifying violations of the transition density by the digital data.

30 41. The improvement according to Claim 40 wherein an indication that the loop is down is provided upon identification of one or more violations of the transition density.

35 42. The improvement according to Claim 1 wherein said hub is a Fibre Channel hub such that said digital data is in the form of Fibre Channel characters which pass through said hub, at least some of said Fibre Channel characters being subject to invalidation within the system so as to violate predefined Fibre Channel protocol standards and wherein said arrangement is configured for identifying invalid ones of the Fibre Channel characters.

5 43. The improvement according to Claim 42 wherein said arrangement is configured for examining the Fibre Channel Characters at each of said points in a way which isolates the invalid Fibre Channel characters to origination at a certain one of said points.

10 44. The improvement according to Claim 43 wherein said hub is configured for interconnection of said stations in a main loop using a series of ports such that one or more of said stations may be serially connected to each of the ports, with the station or stations connected to each of the ports of the hub forming a lobe of the main loop and wherein said arrangement is further configured for providing an indication as to a defect associated with a particular lobe based on the invalid Fibre Channel characters detected.

15 45. The improvement according to Claim 44 wherein said indication is given in the form of a recommendation that the physical interconnection between the station on the particular lobe and the hub should be checked or replaced.

 46. In a hub configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations using a loop as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations on the loop under specific operational conditions, the improvement comprising the step of:

20 monitoring said digital data at a plurality of points distributed within the hub and between at least two different pairs of the stations for use in determining certain characteristics of said data in a way which provides for non-invasive identification of one or more conditions related to the operational status of the system.

 47. The improvement according to Claim 46 wherein each station is identified by an ALPA as one of the certain data characteristics of interest and wherein at least a preliminary map of said digital system is established by monitoring the ALPA's present at one or more of said points.

25 48. The improvement according to Claim 47 wherein said ALPA's are examined at one of said points by using ARB commands issued by active ones of the stations such that the active stations are identified.

 49. The improvement according to Claim 47 wherein said ALPA's are examined using OPN commands in which different open commands uniquely identify different ones of the stations in a way which serves to at least identify the destination of the data.

30 50. The improvement according to Claim 49 wherein the digital system is configured such that any one of the stations which receives its own ALPA as part of an OPN command on the loop will not retransmit the OPN command including its own ALPA and any one of the stations which receives an OPN command which does not include its ALPA will retransmit the OPN command on the loop and wherein said preliminary map is established at least in part by observing for response of the stations to which the different OPN commands are directed.

35 51. In a digital system including a loop configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of the digital system such that digital data is transmitted between the stations on the loop under particular operational conditions and in which system the stations pass idle characters between one another on the loop at times when said digital data is not being transmitted, the improvement comprising:

40 an arrangement for monitoring certain characteristics of said idle characters in a way which provides for detecting one or more conditions related to the operational status of one or more of the stations.

5 52. The improvement according to Claim 51 wherein said arrangement monitors points on said loop between at least two different pairs of said stations.

 53. The improvement according to Claim 52 wherein said arrangement compares the idle characters on said loop present between the two different pairs of stations to a standard idle character format in order to identify corrupted ones of the idle characters.

10 54. The improvement according to Claim 53 wherein the points are selected so as to establish a particular one of said stations originating the corrupted ones of the idle characters.

 55. The improvement according to Claim 54 further comprising means for generating a notification that said particular station is defective.

15 56. The improvement according to Claim 54 further comprising means for removing said particular station from the loop such that subsequent digital data to be transmitted on the loop is not lost due to the particular station.

 57. The improvement according to Claim 56 wherein said arrangement is configured for continuing to monitor said points to verify integrity of the idle characters following the removal of the particular station from the loop.

20 58. In a Fibre Channel system configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system using a main loop such that digital data flows between the stations on the main loop through a Fibre Channel hub based on operational status of the system, said Fibre Channel hub being configured for interconnection of said stations using a series of ports which interface with said main loop, each station being removably receivable in one of said ports such that each one of said stations is selectively insertable in the main loop via the ports to cause
25 said digital data to flow through the stations and such that each one of the stations is selectively and individually bypassable with respect to the main loop while the station is received in one of the ports to prevent said digital data from flowing through each of the stations. the improvement comprising:

 an arrangement forming part of the hub and part of at least one selected station configured for sending a set of loop-back test data from the selected station to the hub when the selected station is received in one of the ports
30 and, thereafter, looping the set of loop-back test data back to the selected station in a loop-back mode in a way which confirms operation of the selected station using the port into which the selected station is received and which also confirms the operation of at least a portion of said hub.

 59. The arrangement according to Claim 58 further configured for entering said loop-back mode at least after a new station has been initially received in one of said ports.

35 60. The arrangement according to Claim 58 further configured to operate in said loop-back mode using diagnostic means connectable at points within the hub and between at least two different pairs of the stations for monitoring certain characteristics of said set of loop-back data in a way which provides for non-invasive confirmation of the operation of said portion of the hub and of the operation of the port into which the selected station is received.

40 61. The arrangement according to Claim 60 wherein said diagnostic means includes a diagnostics loop separate from the main loop and connected between the stations and further includes analysis means, said

5 diagnostics loop being configured for selectively copying the set of loop-back data from one of said points on the main loop at a time and, thereafter, for transmitting the copied digital data to said analysis means.

62. The arrangement according to Claim 58 wherein said arrangement is configured for initially maintaining a received station in a bypassed condition with respect to said main loop during said loop-back mode while verification of certain aspects of the operation of the inserted station is performed whereby connection of a defective received station with the main loop is prevented.

63. In a Fibre Channel system configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system using a main loop such that digital data flows between the stations on the main loop through a Fibre Channel hub, said Fibre Channel hub being configured for interconnection of said stations using a series of ports interfaced with said main loop, each station being removably receivable in a respective one of said ports such that each one of said stations is selectively insertable in the main loop when received in one of the ports to cause said digital data to flow through the stations, a method of inserting a selected station in the main loop, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) positioning the selected station as being received in an available one of the ports;
- b) maintaining the selected station disconnected from the main loop;
- 20 c) while the selected station is disconnected from the main loop, performing an external loop-back test which verifies integrity of the selected station; and
- d) connecting the selected station to the main loop only after the integrity of the selected station has been verified using the external loop-back test.

64. The method according to Claim 63 including the step of providing a notification in a predetermined way if the selected station is not connected to the main loop within a specified period of time following insertion of the selected station into the available port.

65. The method according to Claim 64 wherein said notification is provided at a remote location with respect to said Fibre Channel hub.

66. In a Fibre Channel system including a plurality of stations interconnected through a hub to form a main loop such that each station, including its connection to the hub, forms a lobe of the main loop and such that digital loop data normally flows between the stations on the main loop, a method of verifying the integrity of a selected one of said lobes using said hub, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) establishing digital test data designed to illicit a predetermined response if received by the station connected to the selected lobe;
- 35 b) if said digital loop data is flowing through the selected lobe, isolating the selected lobe from the main loop such that the digital loop data continues to flow on the main loop;
- c) transmitting the digital test data from the hub such that the digital test data is placed enroute to the station connected to the selected lobe;
- d) thereafter, in the hub, listening on the selected lobe for said predetermined response from the station on the selected lobe; and
- 40 e) providing an indication as to the integrity of the selected lobe based upon detection of the predetermined response from the station on the selected lobe.

5 67. The method according to Claim 66 wherein the digital test data "illicits" the predetermined response of the station in the form of a copy of the digital test data.

10 68. The method according to Claim 66 wherein the station on the selected lobe includes a loop state machine and wherein the digital test data is an ordered set which should illicit a different response from the loop state machine as the predetermined response of the station on the selected lobe such that the integrity of the loop state machine is confirmed.

 69. The method according to Claim 68 wherein said different response is a particular ordered set.

15 70. In a Fibre Channel system configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system using a main loop such that digital data flows between the stations on the main loop through a hub, said hub being configured for interconnection of said stations using a series of ports interfaced with said main loop, each port including a hub transmitter for sending the digital data from the hub to the station connected with that port and each station, including its connection to the hub, forming a lobe of the main loop, a method of verifying the integrity of a selected one of said lobes using said hub, said method comprising the steps of:

- 20 a) bypassing the selected lobe with respect to the main loop;
- b) configuring each hub transmitter such that receipt of a disable signal causes one of the hub transmitters receiving the disable signal to stop sending the digital data to the station connected with the selected lobe;
- c) sending the disable signal to the hub transmitter which transmits said digital data to the station connected to the selected lobe;
- 25 d) thereafter, in the hub, listening on the selected lobe for a predetermined response from the station on the selected lobe; and
- e) providing an indication as to the integrity of the selected lobe based upon detection of the predetermined response from the station on the selected lobe.

 71. The method according to Claim 70 wherein said system is a Fibre Channel system and wherein the hub listens for a LIP F8 ordered set as said predetermined response.

30 72. In a Fibre channel system configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations using a loop as part of a digital system such that digital data flows including ordered sets flows between the stations on the loop based on operational status of the system, said stations being interconnected by a hub which partially defines said loop, a management arrangement comprising:

- 35 a) monitoring means forming one part of said hub for non-invasively monitoring a plurality of points distributed on said loop between pairs of said stations that are adjacent to one another with respect to said loop for the presence at said points of one of a number of predetermined types of ordered sets, which predetermined ordered set types are indicative of the operational status of the stations and of the hub; and
- b) analysis means forming another part of said hub for establishing at least one status indication based on the presence of said predetermined ordered set types at one or more of said points.

40 73. The management arrangement according to Claim 72 wherein said status indication is selected from an array of loop states ranging from non-operational to fully operational and said management arrangement includes control means for responding to said status indication in a way which alters the overall configuration of the

5 loop to move the operational status of the system more toward fully operational when the status indication is within a predetermined range from non-operational in said array of loop states.

74. The management arrangement according to Claim 72 wherein said status indication is an overall health indication of the condition of said loop based upon the predetermined ordered set type that is present at each of said points.

10 75. The management arrangement according to Claim 72 wherein the status indication is selected from a group of loop states including INOPERATIVE, INITIALIZING, OPEN-INIT, UP and UP+FRAME.

76. The management arrangement according to Claim 75 including display means wherein said loop is represented visually in at least one view as an icon on said display means and wherein said icon includes one of a number of different colors which denote said status indication.

15 77. The management arrangement according to Claim 76 wherein each station is physically connected to one of a number of ports, respectively, on said hub and wherein said analysis means is configured for generating additional status indications such that each port has an associated additional status indication and said display means is further configured such that selection of said icon leads to a hub view which is physically representative of said hub including said ports and said display means uses said different colors in association with said ports in a way
20 which indicates the additional status indication associated with each port.

78. The management arrangement according to Claim 77 wherein selection of one of said ports as represented on said display means leads to an additional view on the display means which includes specific information related to the selected port and to any station connected with the selected port.

25 79. The management arrangement according to Claim 78 including control means forming part of said hub and having a series of user selectable port control modes such that any port may be placed in one of the control modes and wherein said specific information includes an indication of the port control mode currently selected for the selected port.

80. The management arrangement according to Claim 79 wherein said stations are selectively connectable with said loop using said port control modes and wherein said port control modes include an automatic
30 mode in which each station is connected to the loop based on certain criteria.

81. The management arrangement according to Claim 79 wherein said stations are selectively connectable with said loop using said port control modes and wherein said port control modes include a forced bypass mode in which any station inserted into any port in forced bypass mode is disconnected from the loop.

35 82. The management arrangement according to Claim 79 wherein said stations are selectively connectable with said loop using said port control modes and wherein said port control modes include a loop-back mode such that digital data transmitted from a particular station connected to a port in loop-back mode is returned to that particular station without being transmitted to other stations on the loop.

40 83. The management arrangement according to Claim 79 wherein said stations are selectively connectable with said loop using said port control modes and wherein said port control modes include a forced insert mode such that a particular station connected to a port in forced insert mode is always connected to the loop.

5 84. The management arrangement according to Claim 79 wherein each station is connected to a
respective one of the ports using a gigabit interface converter (GBIC) inserted into the port, each GBIC being
selected from one of a number of possible GBIC types and each GBIC including readable information identifying its
type out of the number of possible GBIC types and wherein the management arrangement includes means for
10 reading the readable information from the GBIC and for providing said readable information as part of said specific
information.

 85. The management arrangement according to Claim 77 including control means forming part of said
hub and configured such that any port may be beacons in a predetermined way and wherein selection of one of said
ports as represented on said display means leads to a port view on the display means which includes means for
causing the selected port to be beacons.

15 86. The management arrangement according to Claim 85 wherein said additional view includes a
beacon port selection box for causing the selected port to be beacons.

 87. The management arrangement according to Claim 85 wherein said beacons of the selected port
is visible in the hub view in a way which directs a viewer's attention to the selected port.

20 88. The management arrangement according to Claim 85 wherein the selected port is beacons in said
predetermined way using beacons means located physically adjacent to the selected port on said hub.

 89. The management arrangement according to Claim 85 wherein said beacons means includes a
light emitting arrangement adjacent to the selected port on said hub which flashes at a selected interval when the
selected port is beacons.

25 90. The management arrangement according to Claim 72 further comprising:
c) display means for simultaneously displaying the predetermined ordered set type which is present at
each one of said points so as to enable an operator of the system to make determinations as to an individual status of
each one of the stations.

 91. The management arrangement according to Claim 90 wherein the predetermined ordered set types
include LIP, LIP F7, LIP F8, OPN, ARB, SOF, USR and IDLE.

30 92. In a Fibre channel system configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations using a loop as
part of a digital system such that digital data including ordered sets flows between the stations on the loop based on
operational status of the system, said stations being interconnected by a hub which partially defines said loop, a
method comprising the steps of:

35 a) non-invasively monitoring a plurality of points distributed on said loop between pairs of said
stations that are adjacent to one another with respect to said loop for the presence of one of a number of
predetermined types of ordered sets, which predetermined ordered set types are indicative of the operational status of
the stations and of the loop; and

 b) establishing at least one status indication based on the presence of said predetermined ordered set
types at one or more of said points.

40 93. The method according to Claim 92 wherein said status indication is selected from an array of loop
states ranging from non-operational to fully operational and said method includes the step of responding to said

5 status indication in a way which alters the overall configuration of the loop to move the operational status of the system more toward fully operational when the status indication is within a predetermined range from non-operational in said array of loop states.

94. The method according to Claim 92 wherein said status indication is an overall health indication of the condition of said loop based upon the predetermined ordered set type that is present at each of said points.

10 95. The method according to Claim 94 wherein the status indication is selected from a group of loop states including INOPERATIVE, INITIALIZING, OPEN-INIT, UP and UP+FRAME.

96. The method according to Claim 92 including the step of visually displaying said loop as an icon including one of a number of different colors which denote said status indication.

15 97. The method according to Claim 92 including the step of simultaneously displaying the predetermined ordered set type which is present at each one of said points so as to enable an operator of the system to make determinations as to an individual status of each one of the stations.

20 98. In a Fibre Channel system which interconnects a plurality of stations in a loop using an unmanaged hub as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations on the loop and through the unmanaged hub based on operational status of the system, the system further including an additional hub connected with the unmanaged hub in a predetermined way such that additional stations may be added to the loop by connection with the additional hub and so that said digital data also flows through the additional hub, the improvement comprising:

25 a management arrangement forming part of the additional hub for monitoring said digital data in a way which provides determinations as to certain conditions related to the operation of the Fibre Channel system including the unmanaged hub and stations connected thereto.

99. The improvement according to Claim 98 wherein said determinations relate to utilization of at least a portion of the main loop.

100. The improvement according to Claim 99 wherein the portion of the main loop to which said determinations relate is at least partially extends through the unmanaged hub.

30 101. The improvement according to Claim 99 wherein said arrangement is configured for generating display information based on said determinations.

102. The improvement according to Claim 98 wherein said arrangement uses ordered set detection in making said determinations.

35 103. In a Fibre Channel system which interconnects a plurality of stations in a loop using two or more hubs as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations on the loop and through the hubs based on operational status of the system, the improvement comprising:

an arrangement forming part of each hub configured such that each hub identifies itself in the digital system in a way which provides for correctly establishing a system configuration of the interconnection between all of the hubs within the digital system.

5 104. The improvement according to Claim 103 wherein an additional hub is added, including said arrangement forming a portion thereof, and wherein the arrangement forming the portion of the additional hub identifies itself after being added to the digital system such that an updated system configuration of the interconnection between all of the hubs is established, said updated system configuration including the additional hub.

10 105. The improvement according to Claim 103 including management means configured for receiving and tracking the identification issued by each of the hubs.

 106. The improvement according to Claim 105 wherein said management means includes means for identifying the stations connected to the hubs and for adding the stations to the system configuration in relation to the hubs.

15 107. The improvement according to Claim 106 wherein said management means includes means for producing a map of the system configuration.

 108. In a Fibre Channel system configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system using a main loop such that digital data flows between the stations on the main loop through a hub, said hub being configured for interconnection of said stations using a series of ports interfaced with said main loop such that one or more stations are connected to each port to form a lobe of the main loop, a method of verifying the integrity of a selected one of said lobes including the station or stations in the selected lobe, said method comprising the steps of:

 a) configuring said hub for entering a lobe test mode such that any digital data transmitted to the hub from the station or stations on the selected lobe in the lobe test mode is returned to the selected lobe;

25 b) placing the selected lobe into the lobe test mode while digital data present on the main loop continues to flow thereon; and

 c) thereafter, in the hub, listening on the selected lobe for a predetermined initialization sequence on the selected lobe without affecting digital data flowing on the main loop.

 109. The method according to Claim 108 further comprising the step of:

30 d) providing an indication as to the integrity of the selected lobe based upon detection of the predetermined initialization sequence on the selected lobe.

 110. The method according to Claim 109 wherein the selected initialization sequence is detected by the sequence of ordered sets including LIP, ARB, CLS and SOF.

35 111. In a Fibre Channel hub configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system such that data frames pass through said hub, at least some of said data frames being subject to corruption within the system, and each data frame including a CRC for use in identifying corrupted data frames, the improvement comprising:

 an arrangement forming part of the hub configured for checking the CRC's of data frames passing through the hub in a way which identifies corrupted ones of the data frames.

5 112. The improvement according to Claim 111 wherein each data frame includes a source ALPA and wherein said arrangement is further configured for capturing the source ALPA of each of the corrupted ones of the data frames.

10 113. The improvement according to Claim 112 wherein said hub is configured for interconnection of said stations in a main loop using a series of ports such that one or more of said stations may be serially connected to each of the ports, with the station or stations serially connected to each of the ports of the hub forming a lobe of the main loop and wherein said arrangement uses the captured source ALPA's of corrupted ones of the data frames in a way which identifies a particular station which is serially connected with at least one other station in one lobe of the main loop as a probable cause of the corrupted data frames.

15 114. The improvement according to Claim 111 wherein occurrences of corrupted data frames identified by said arrangement are collected by the arrangement for display in a persistent mode.

20 115. In a Fibre Channel hub configured for interconnection of a plurality of stations as part of a digital system such that digital data in the form of Fibre Channel characters passes through said hub, at least some of said Fibre Channel characters being subject to corruption within the system so as to violate predefined Fibre Channel protocol standards, the improvement comprising:

an arrangement forming part of the hub configured for identifying invalid ones of the Fibre Channel characters.

25 116. The improvement according to Claim 115 wherein said hub is configured for interconnection of said stations in a main loop using a series of ports such that one or more of said stations may be serially connected to each of the ports, with the station or stations connected to each of the ports of the hub forming a lobe of the main loop and wherein said arrangement is configured for isolating the invalid Fibre channel characters to a particular lobe.

 117. The improvement according to Claim 116 wherein said arrangement is configured for providing an indication based on said invalid Fibre Channel Characters that the particular lobe should be checked.

30 118. The improvement according to Claim 115 wherein occurrences of invalid Fibre Channel characters identified by said arrangement are collected by the arrangement for display in a persistent mode.

35 119. In a Fibre Channel system which interconnects a plurality of stations in a loop using at least a first hub as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations on the loop and through the hub or hubs based on operational status of the system, each station being configured such that, upon receipt of a LIP F7 ordered set, the station will transmit a burst of LIP F7 followed by 15 ms of idle characters, a method of identifying an unknown hub requesting insertion in the loop, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) transmitting one burst of LIP F7 from the first hub to the unknown hub;
- b) within 15 ms of ending transmission of the LIP F7 burst, transmitting on the loop an ARB FB from said first hub;
- c) if the ARB FB returns to the first hub, requesting identification information from the unknown hub using said loop; and
- d) if the unknown hub responds to the information identification request, using the first hub to receive a predetermined set of identification information from the unknown hub.

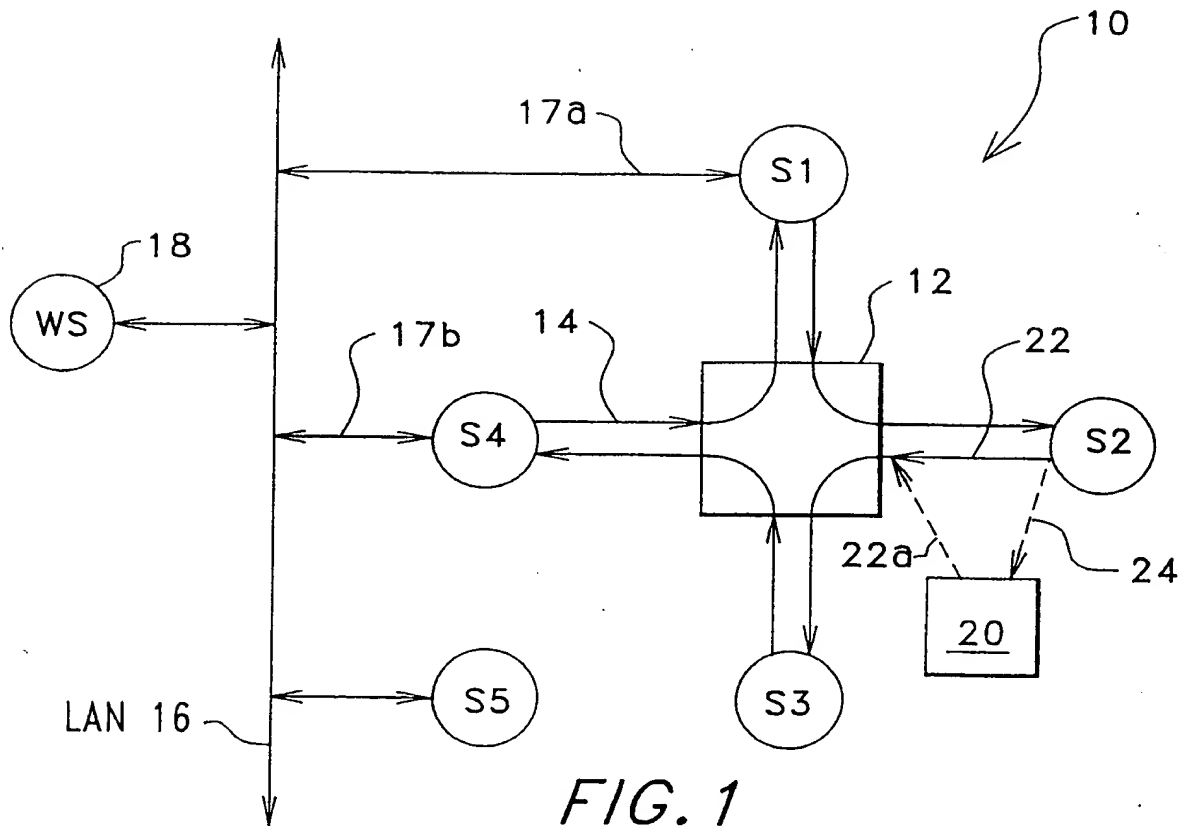


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

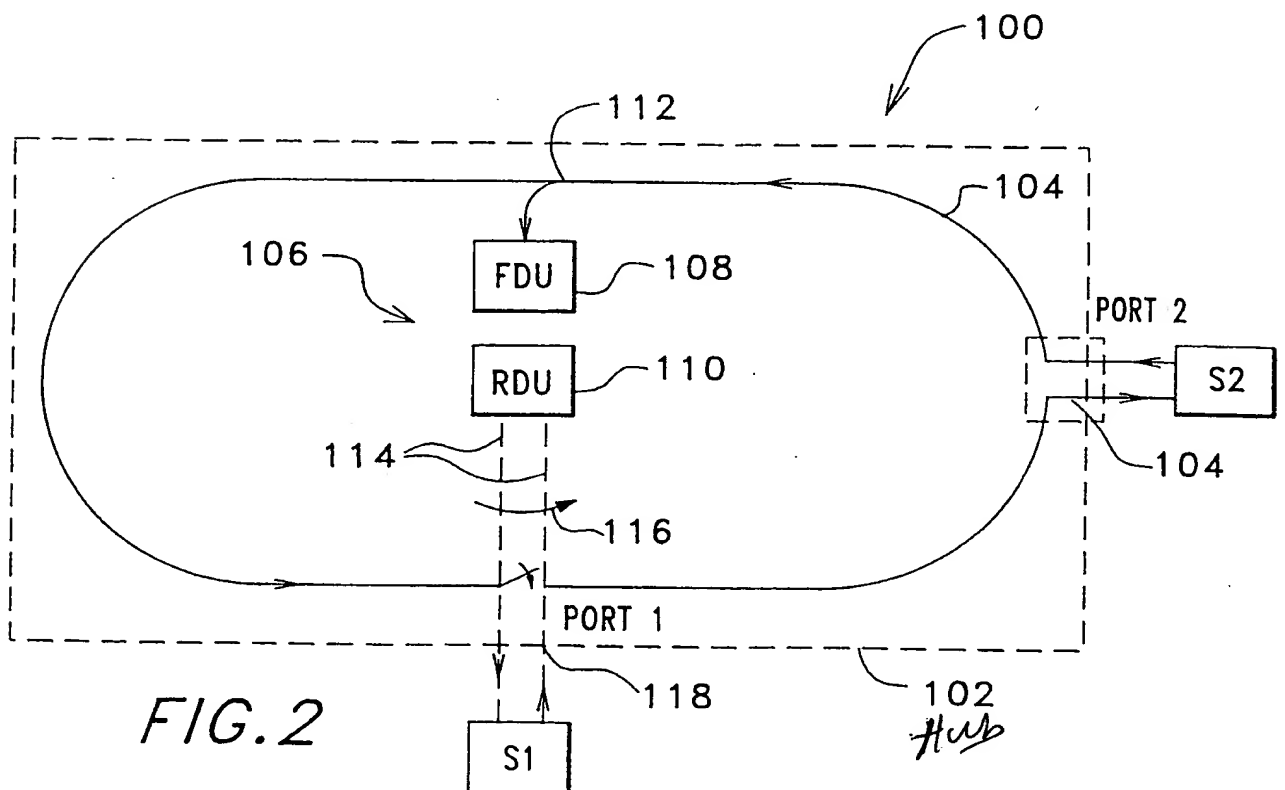


FIG. 2

5 120. The method according to Claim 119 wherein said step of requesting identification from the unknown hub is performed using ordered sets prior to insertion of the unknown hub.

 121. The method according to Claim 119 wherein said identification information is a serial number assigned to the unknown hub.

10 122. In a Fibre Channel system which interconnects a plurality of stations in a loop using at least a first hub as part of a digital system such that digital data flows between the stations on the loop and through the hub or hubs based on operational status of the system, each station being configured such that, upon receipt of LIP F7, the station will transmit a burst of LIP F7 followed by 15 ms of idle characters, a method of identifying an unknown station requesting attachment to the loop, said method comprising the steps of:

- 15 a) transmitting one burst of LIP F7 from the first hub to the additional hub;
- b) within 15 ms of ending transmission of the LIP F7 burst, transmitting on the loop an ARB FB from said first station; and
- c) if the ARB FB does not return to the first station, providing an indication that the unknown station is an attaching station.

20 123. In a Fibre Channel system including at least a first loop and a second loop in which the first and second loops are at least initially operating separately from one another such that different digital data flows around each loop and each loop includes one or more stations attached thereto having an ALPA assigned to each station such that the ALPA's assigned to the stations on the first loop are not necessarily unique with respect to the ALPA's of the stations on the second loop, a method of interconnecting the first loop to the second loop to form a single loop, said method comprising the steps of:

- 25 a) establishing loop input and loop output connection points defined by the first and second loops at which the loops are to be connected with one another such that the loop input connection point of each loop is connected to the loop output connection point of the other loop;
- b) transmitting initialization data from the loop output connection point of the second loop to the loop input connection point of the first loop;
- 30 c) listening at the loop input connection point of the second loop to establish that the initialization data has passed through the first loop and returned to the loop input connection point of the second loop;
- d) transmitting additional initialization data such that the additional initialization data travels around the first loop and the second loop in a predetermined way which initializes both loops and causes a unique ALPA to be assigned to the stations attached to each loop; and
- 35 e) connecting the first and second loop as said single loop to permit a combination of the digital data previously flowing on the first and second loops to flow around the single loop.

 124. The method according to Claim 123 wherein said initialization data and said additional initialization data each include LIP F7 ordered sets.

40 125. The method according to Claim 123 wherein the additional initialization data is transmitted in said predetermined way such that the first loop is reinitialized prior to the second loop being reinitialized.

 126. The method according to Claim 123 wherein the additional initialization data is transmitted in said predetermined way such that the second loop is reinitialized prior to the first loop being reinitialized.

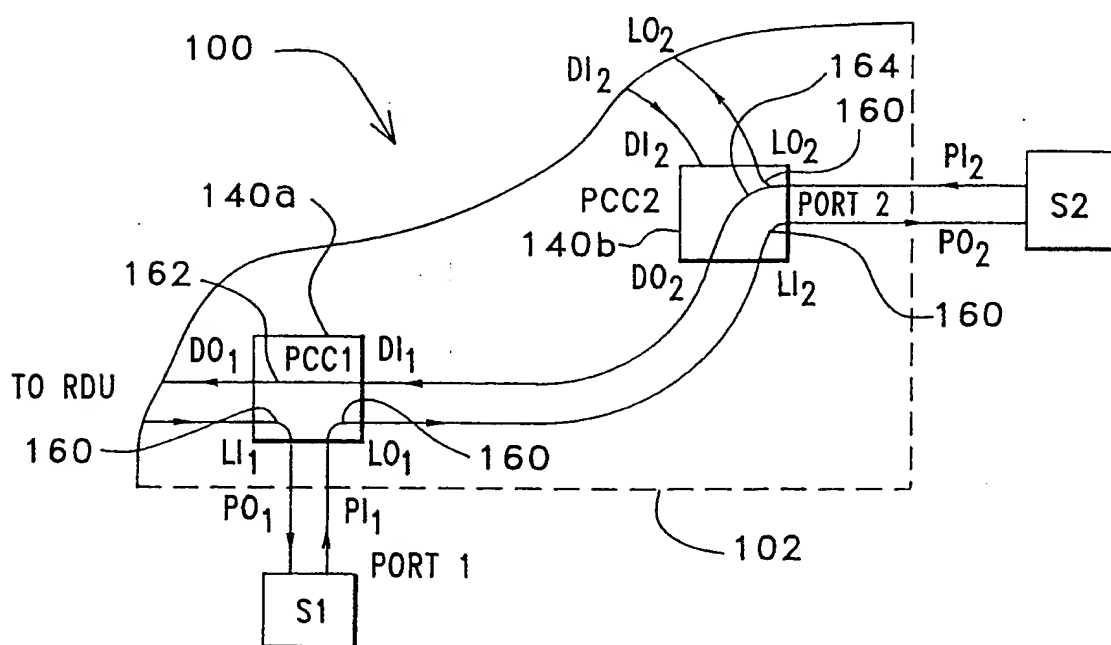
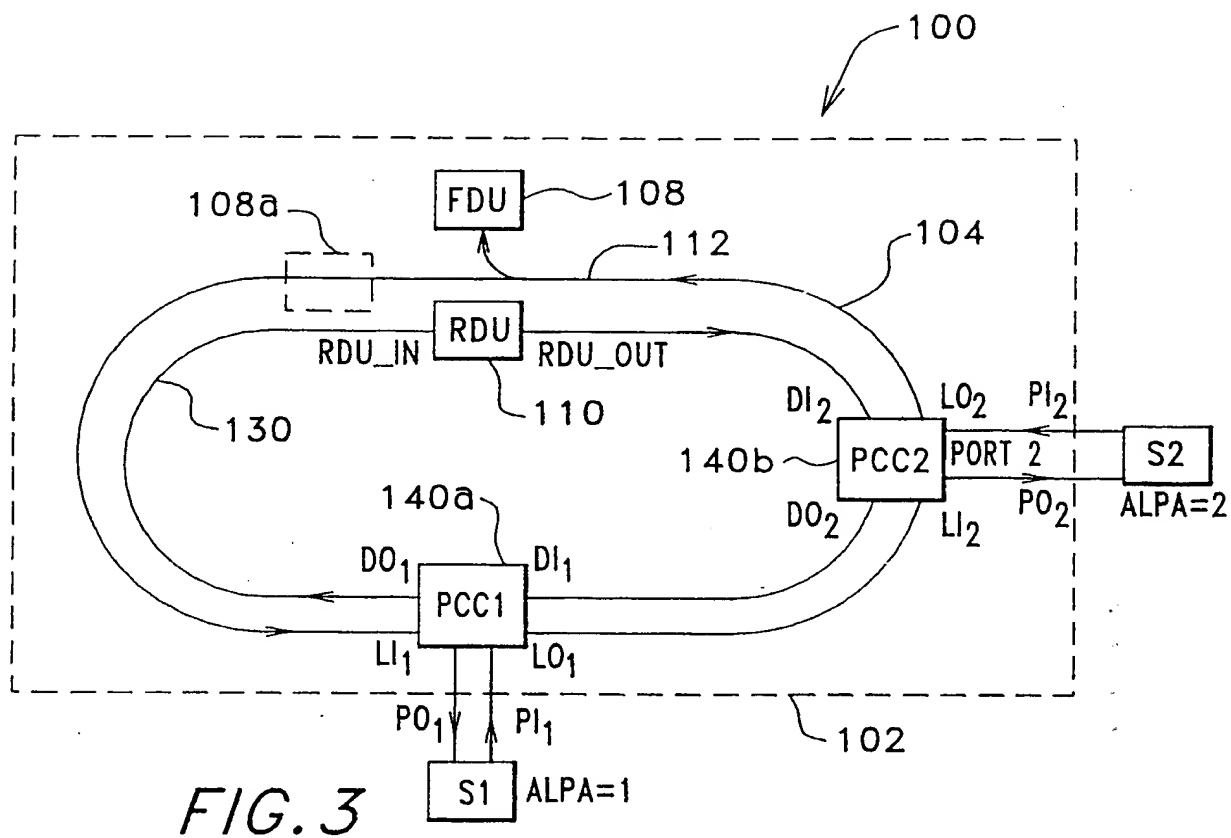


FIG. 5

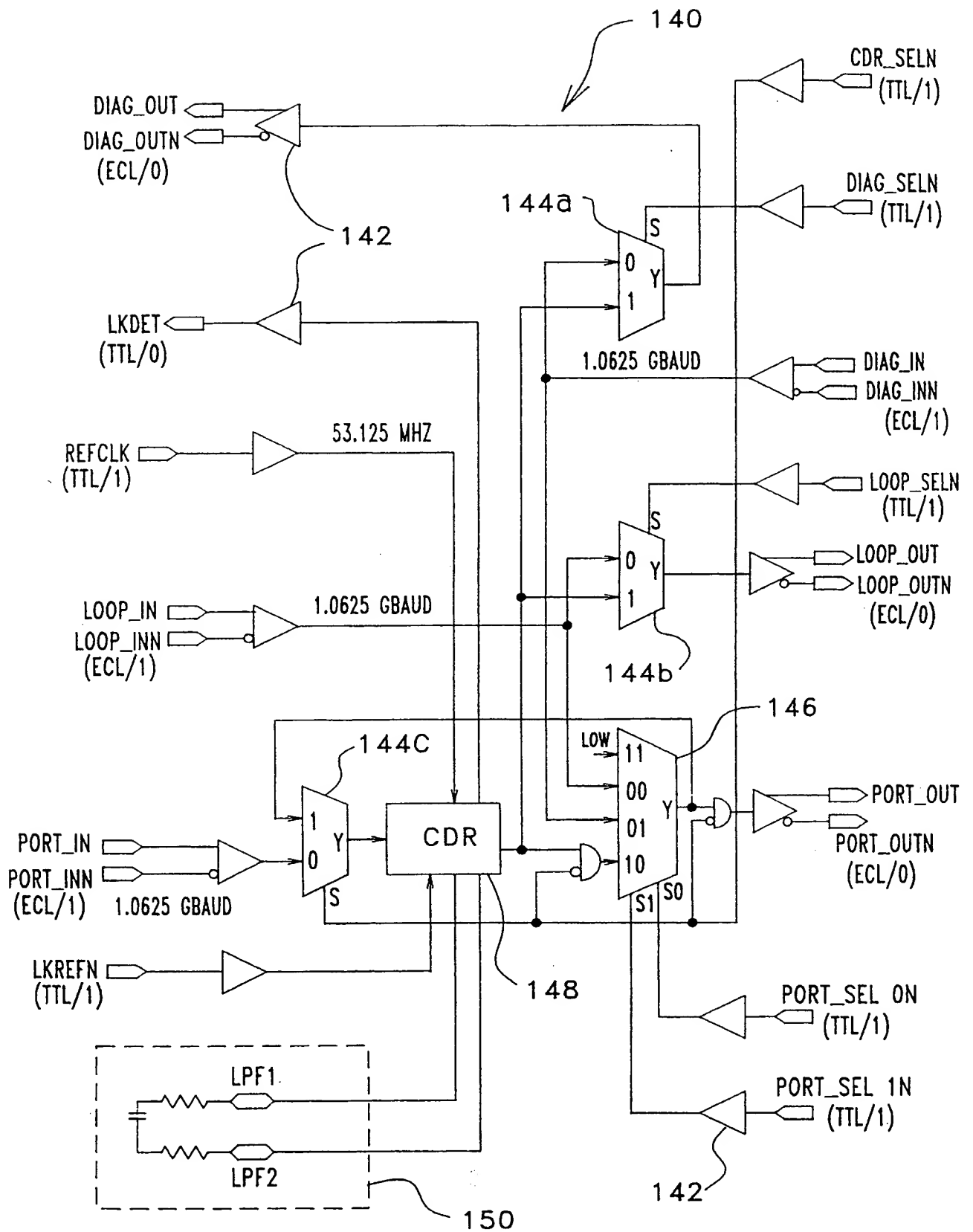
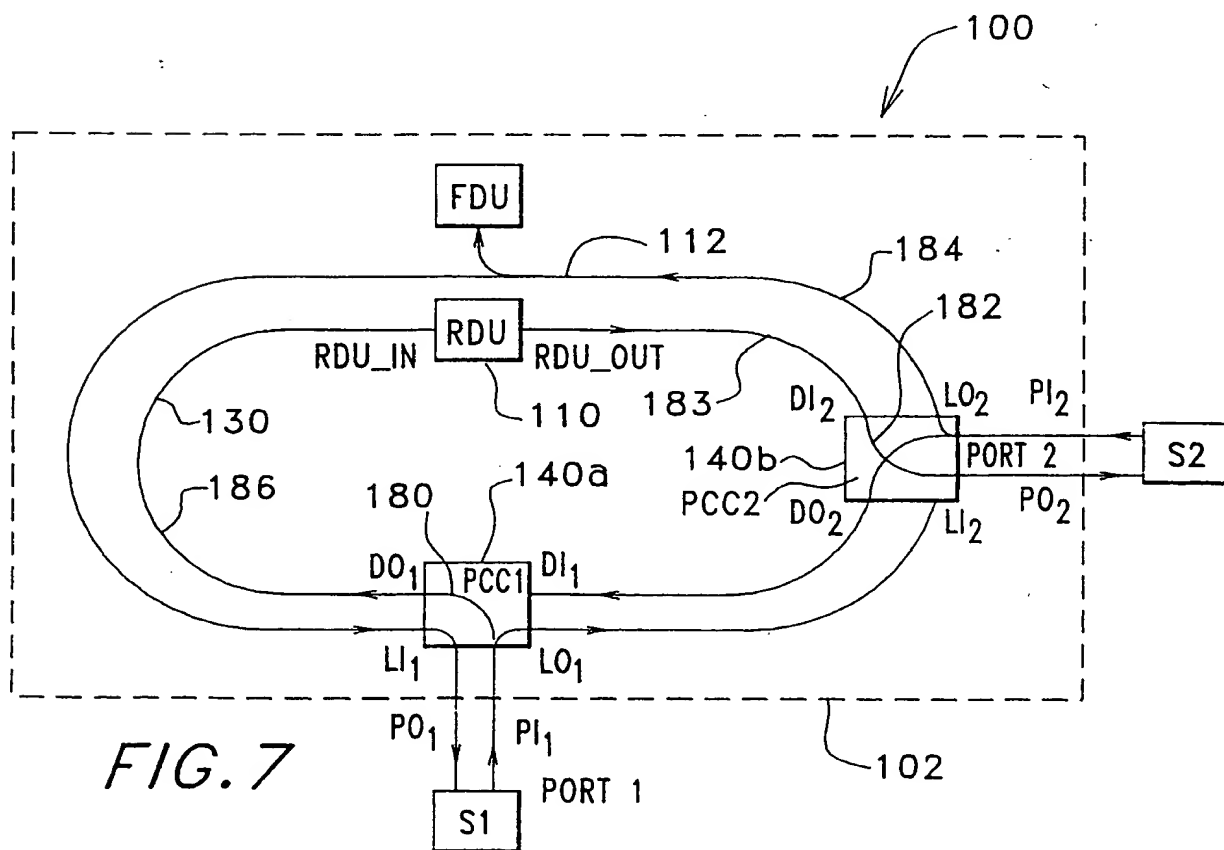
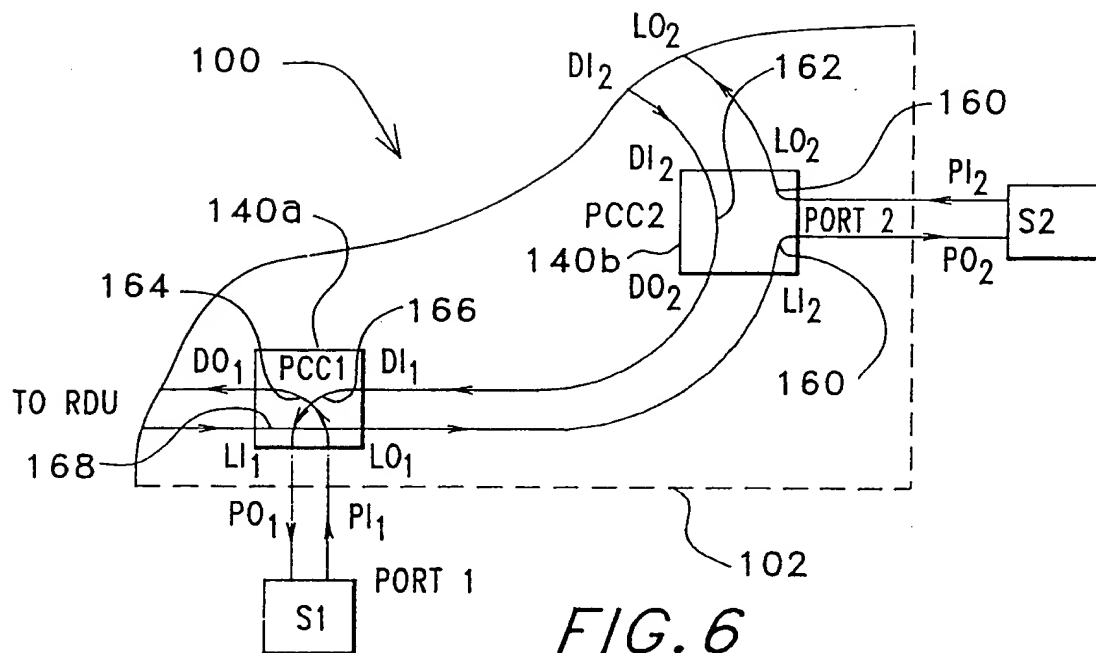


FIG. 4

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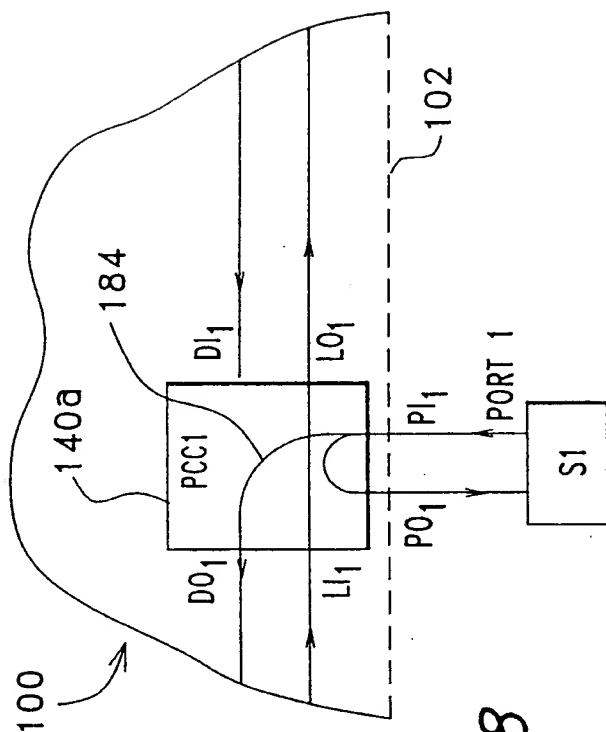


FIG. 8

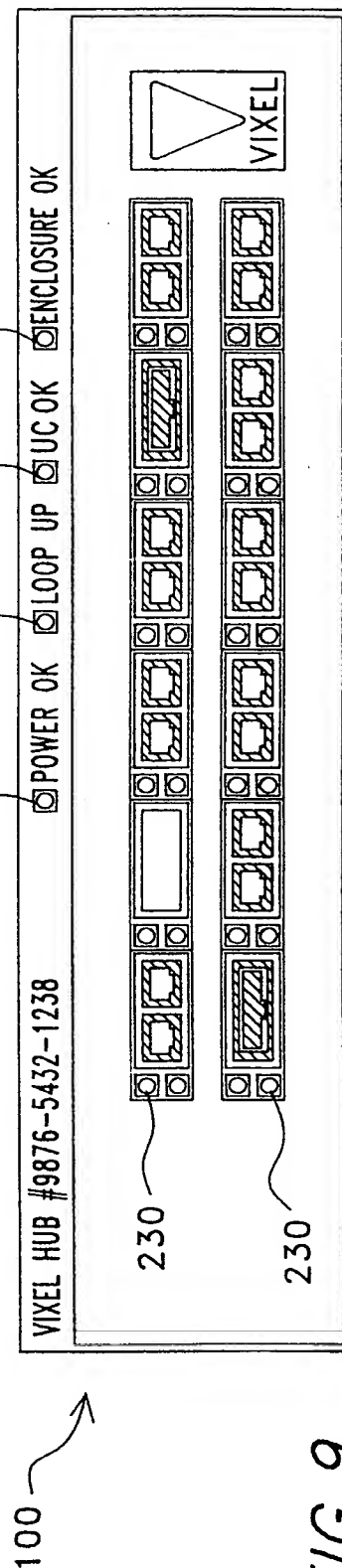


FIG. 9

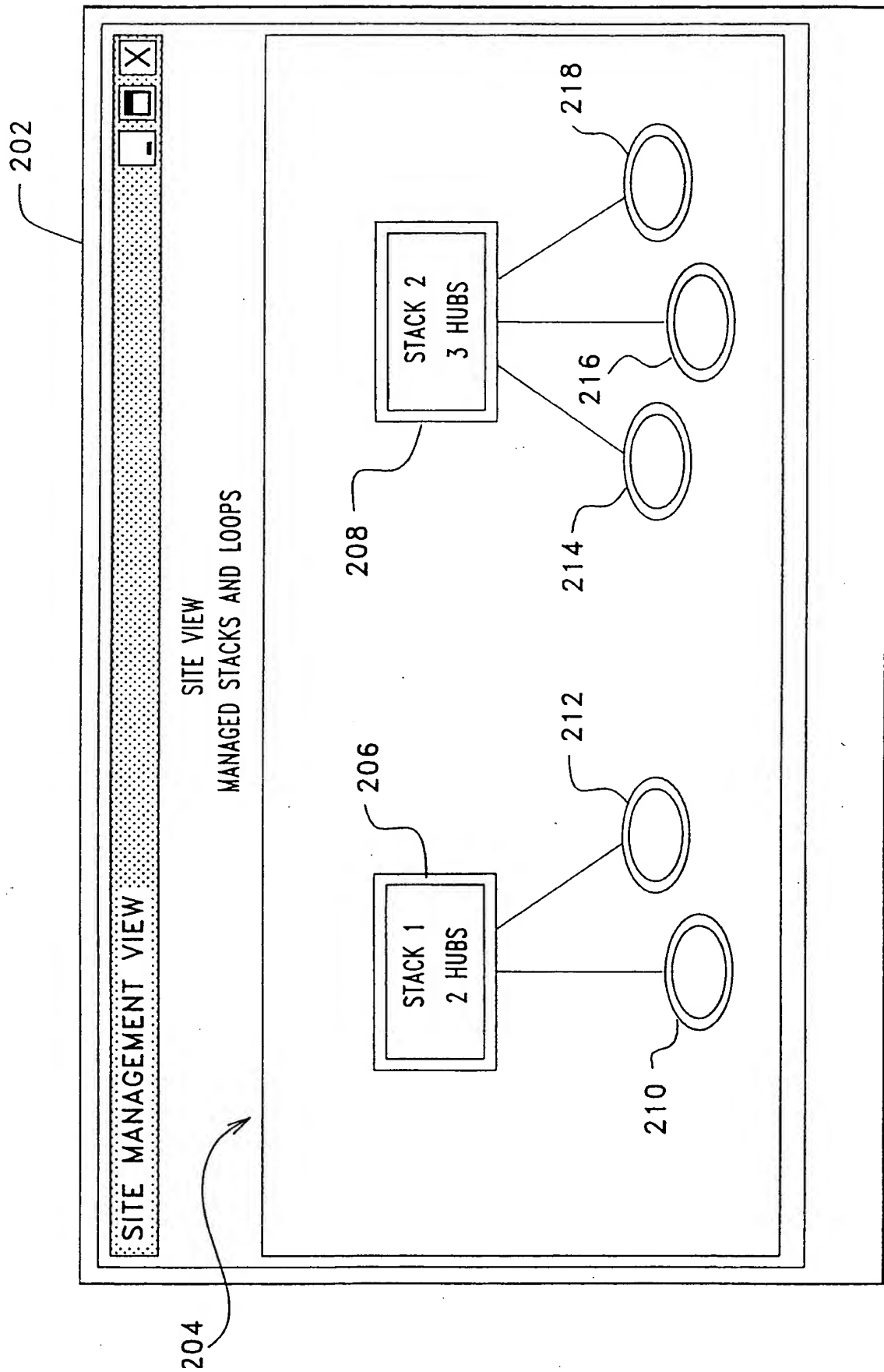


FIG. 10

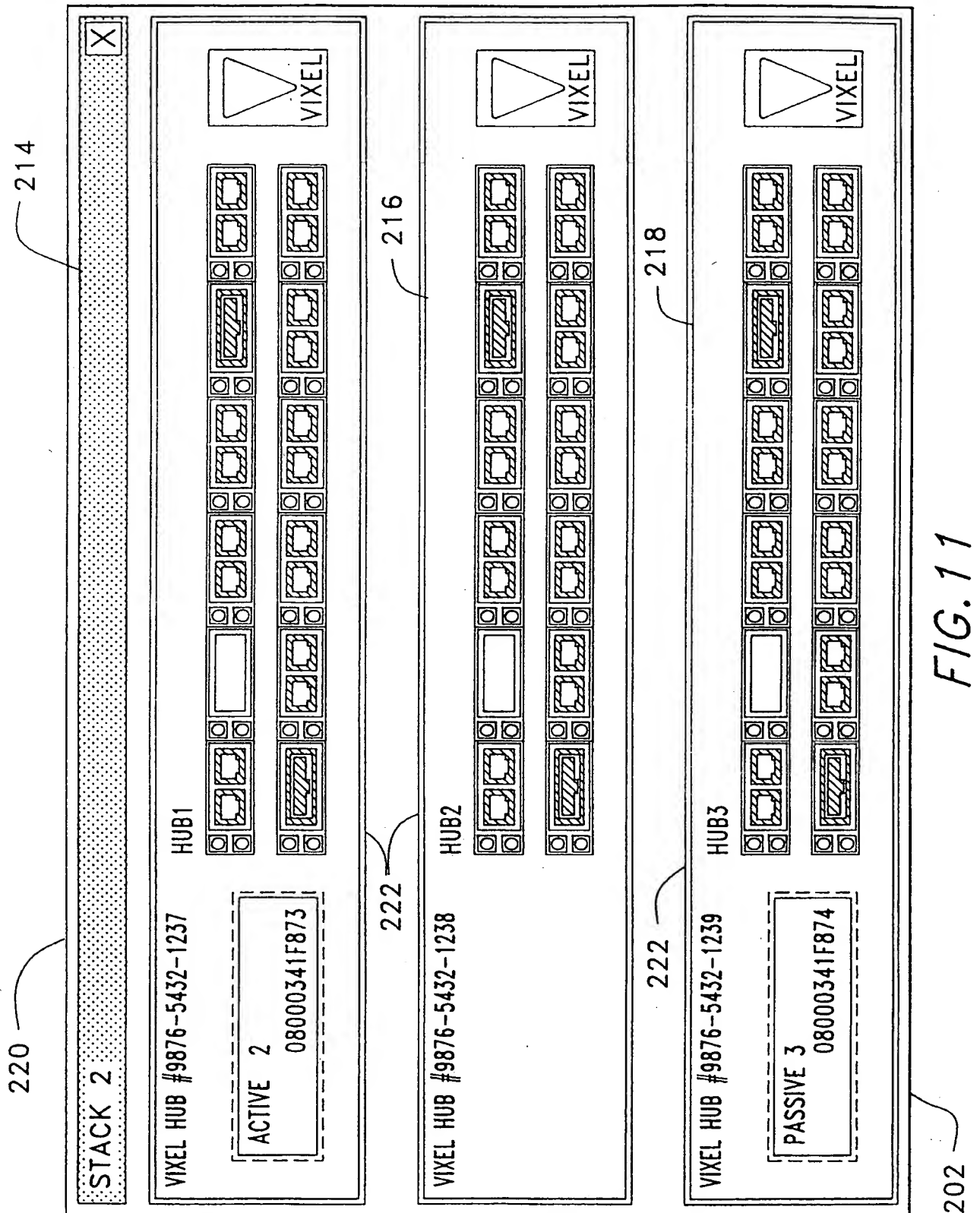


FIG. 11

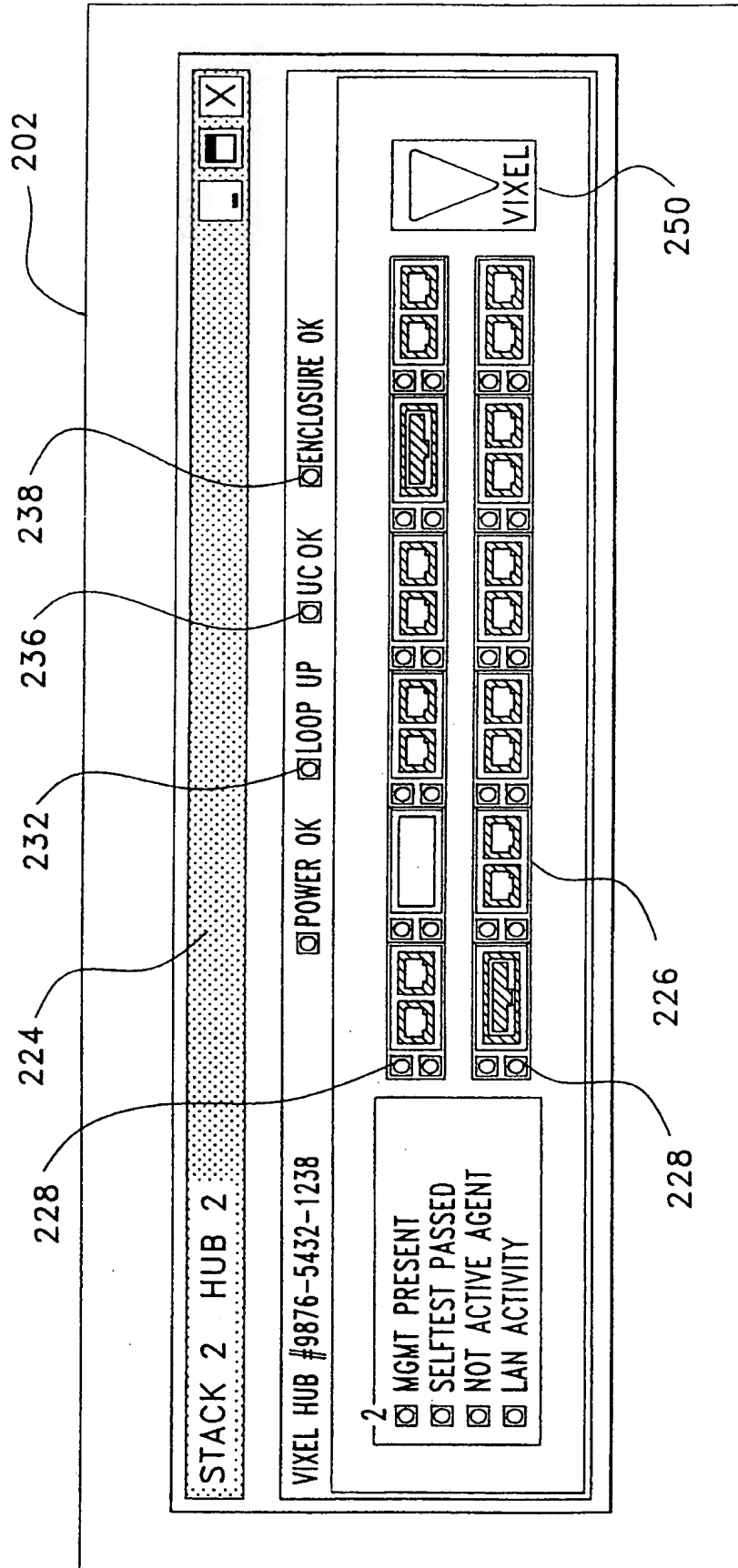


FIG. 12

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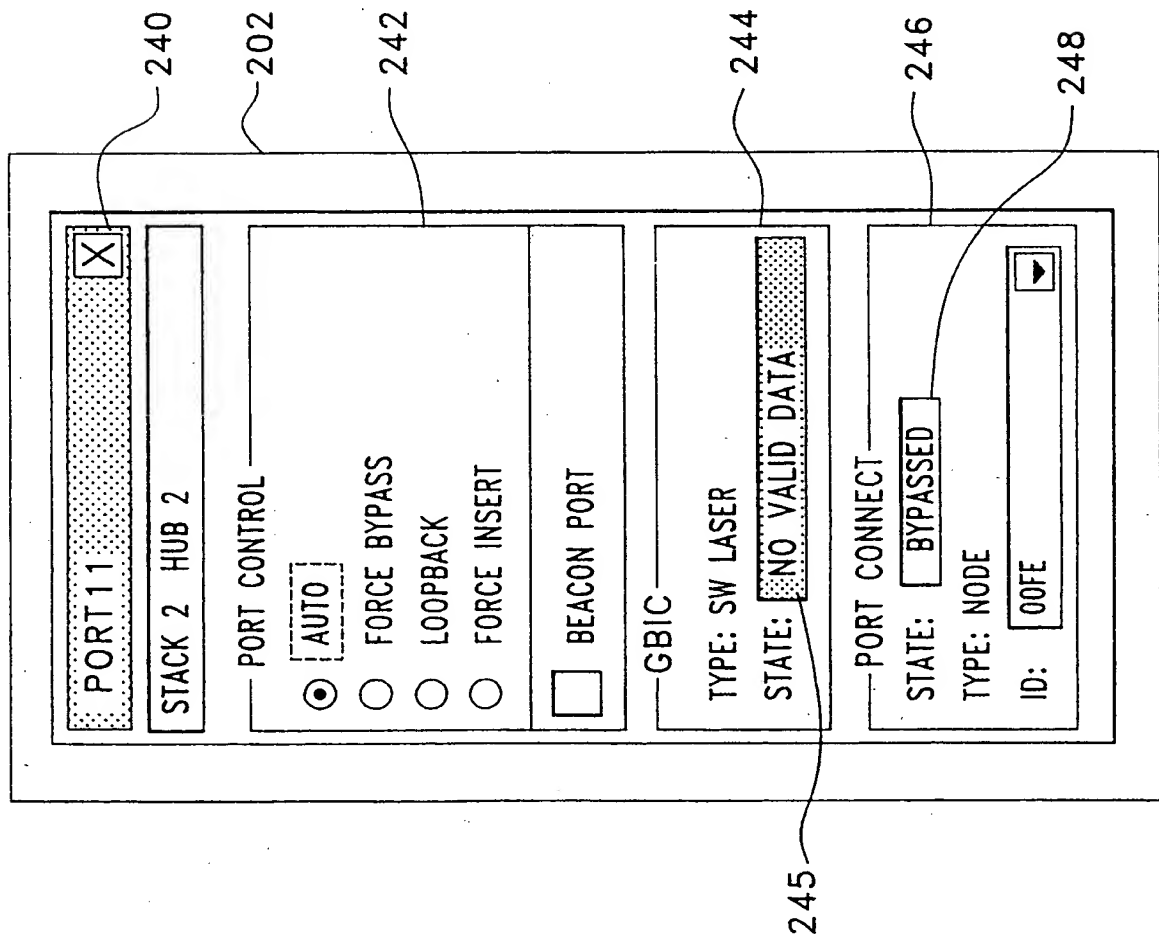


FIG. 13

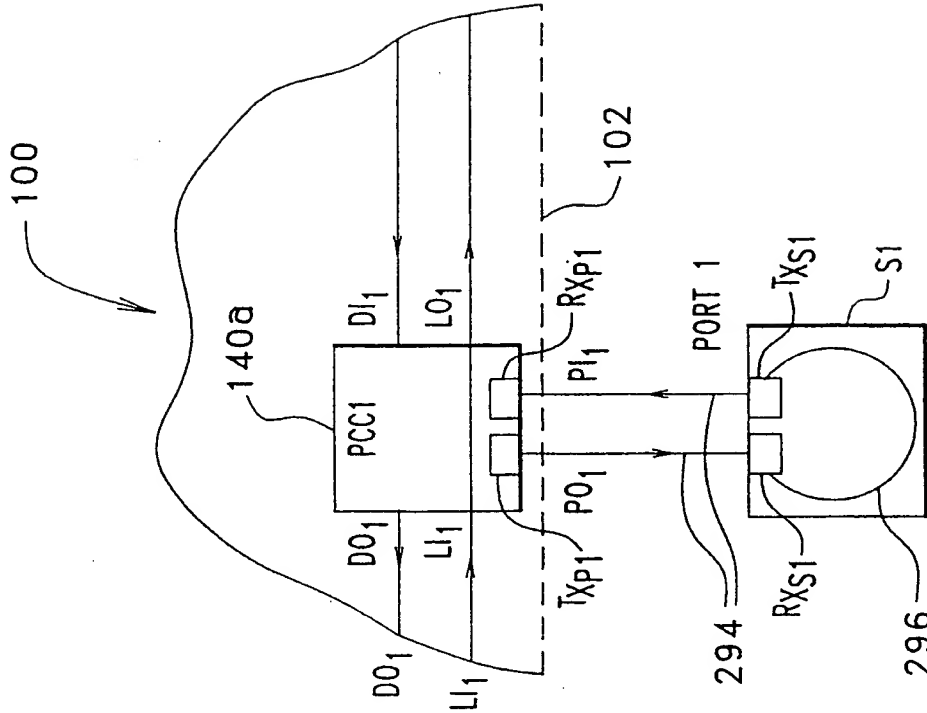


FIG. 16

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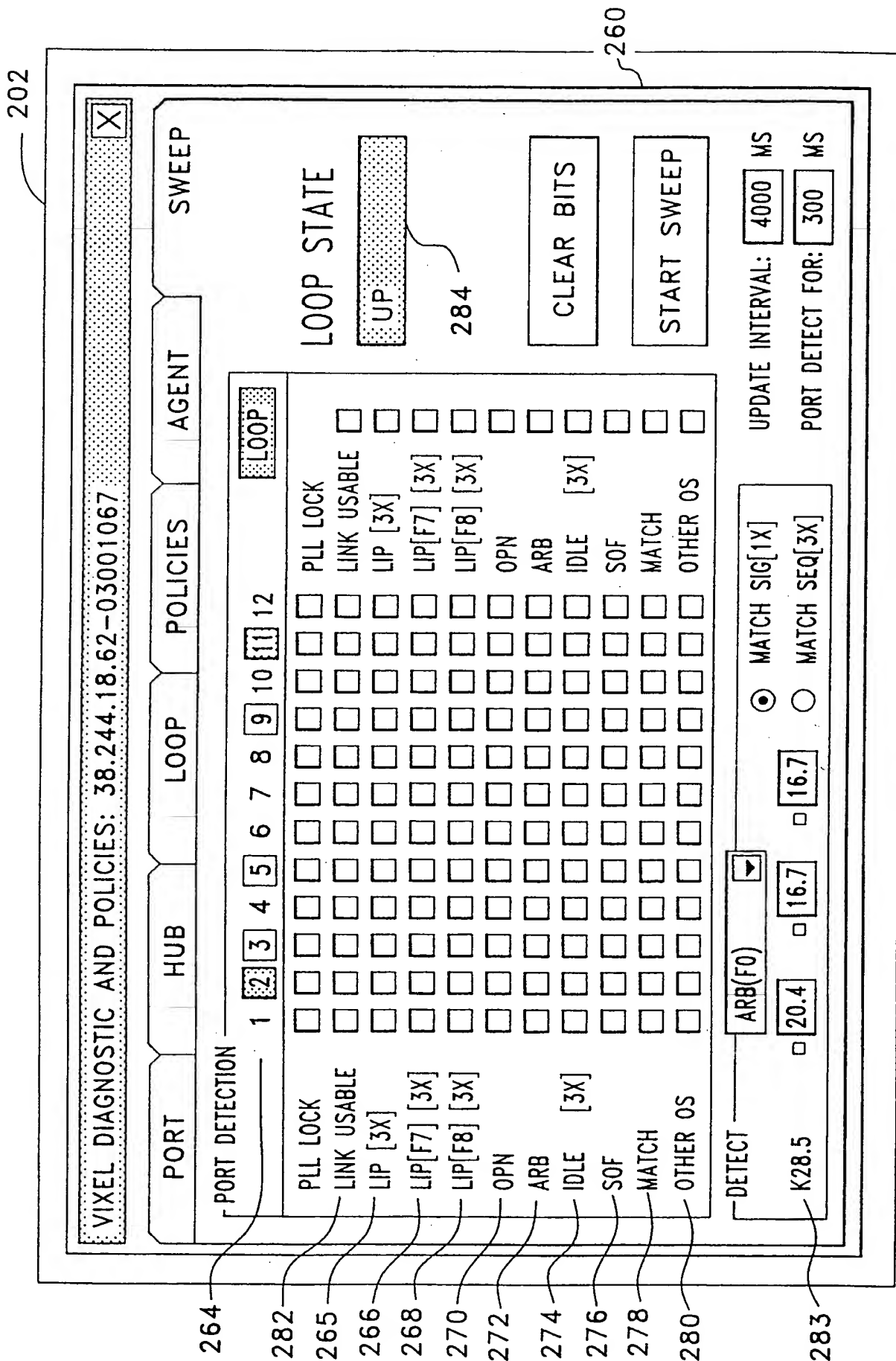


FIG. 14

11/22

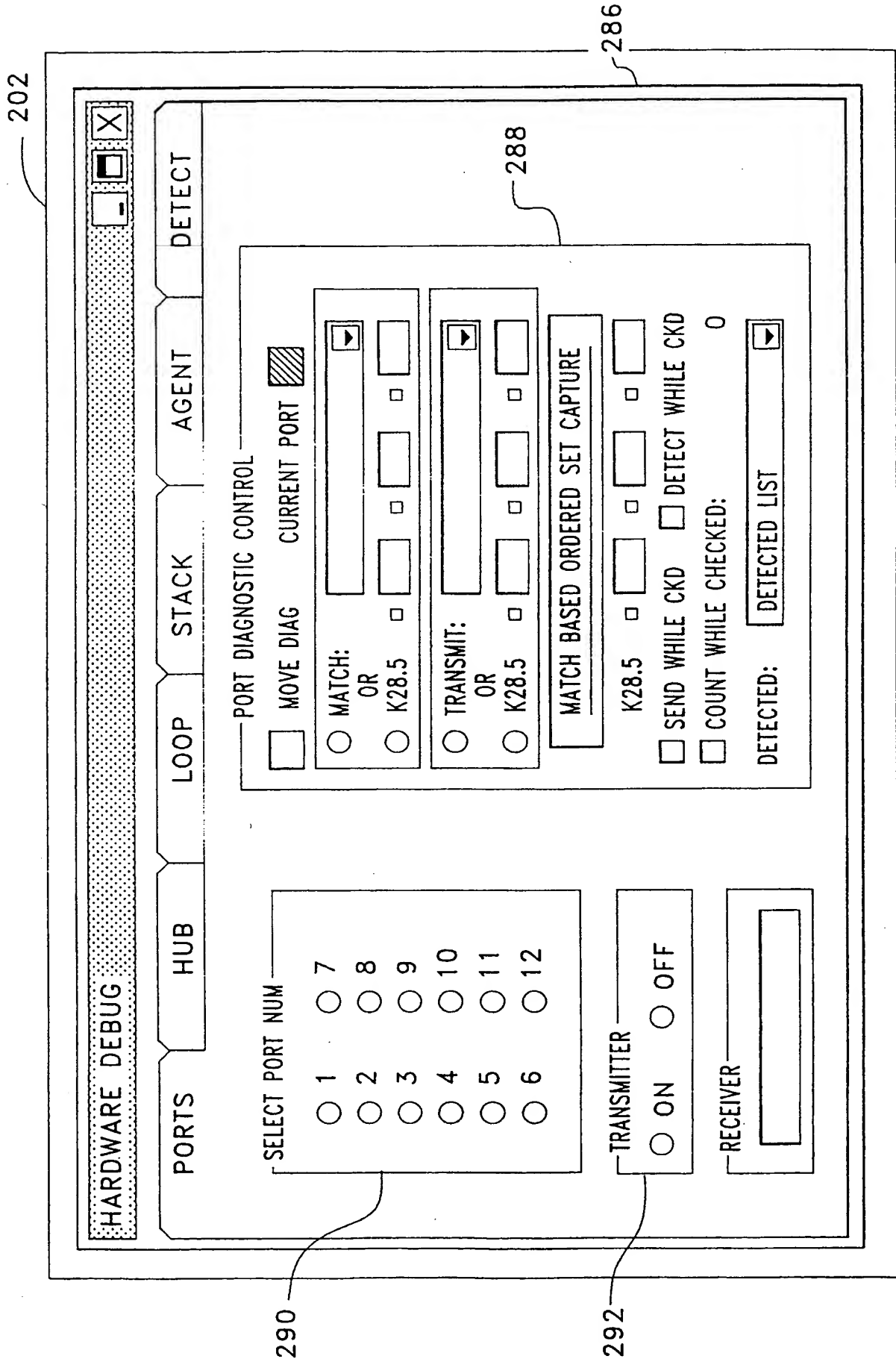
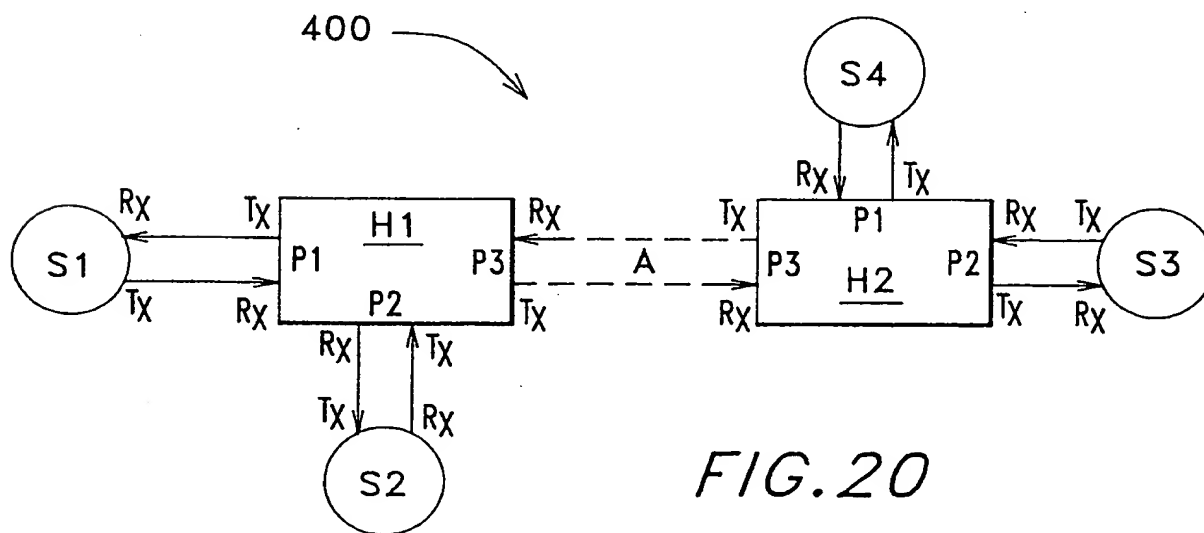
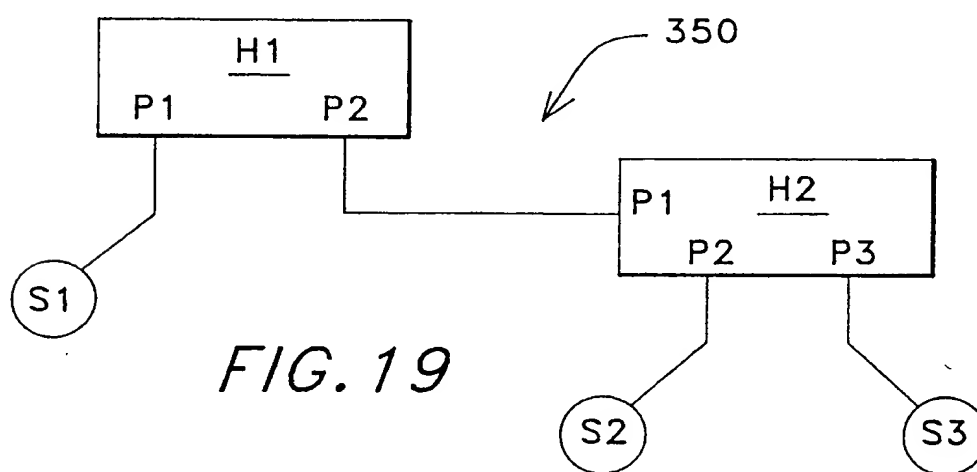
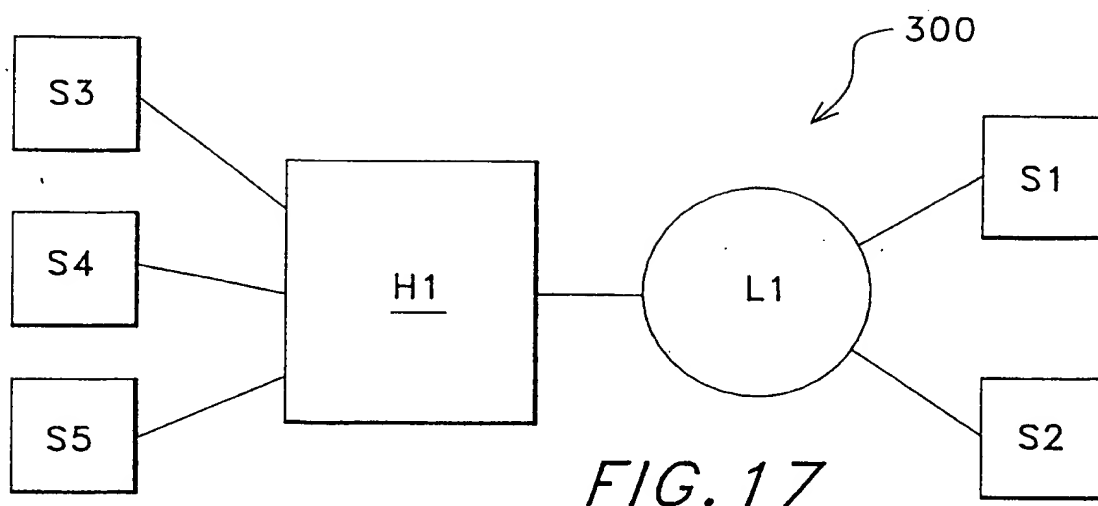
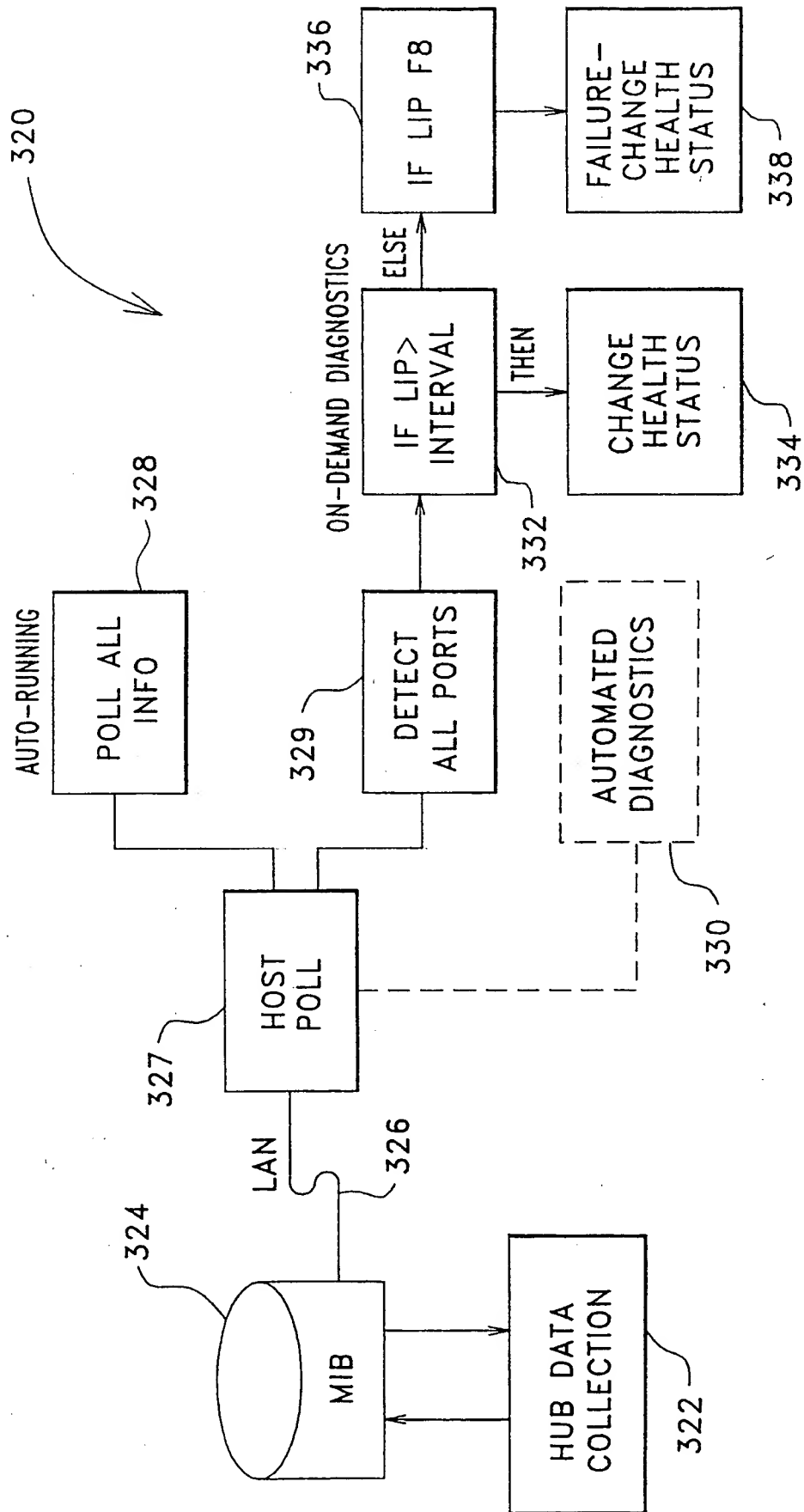


FIG. 15





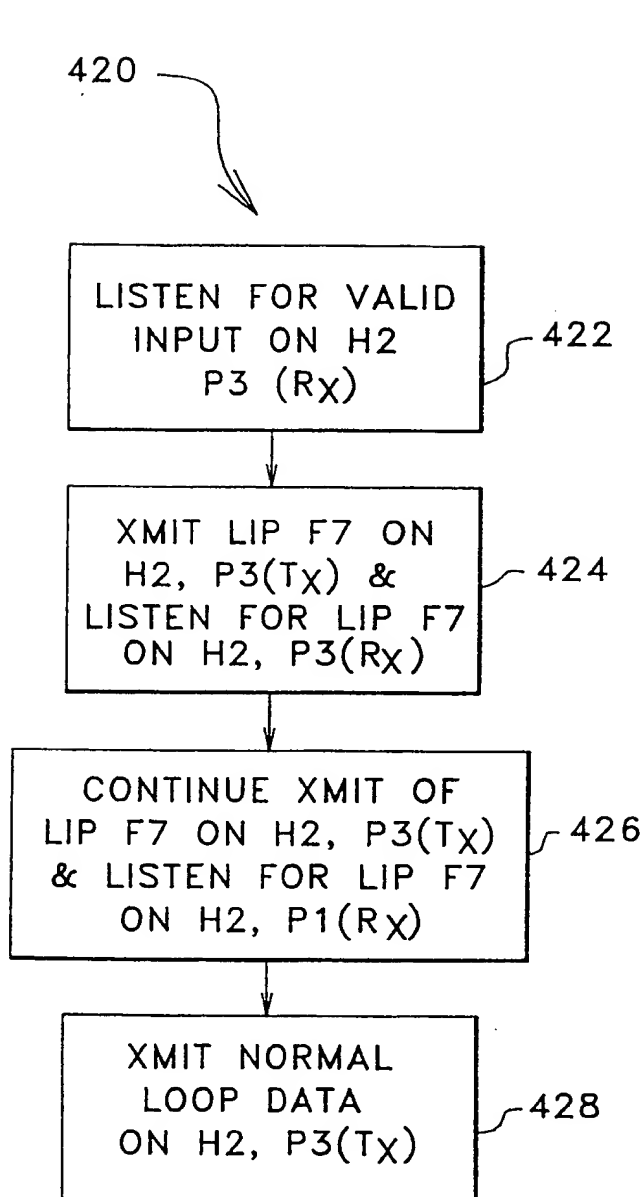


FIG. 21

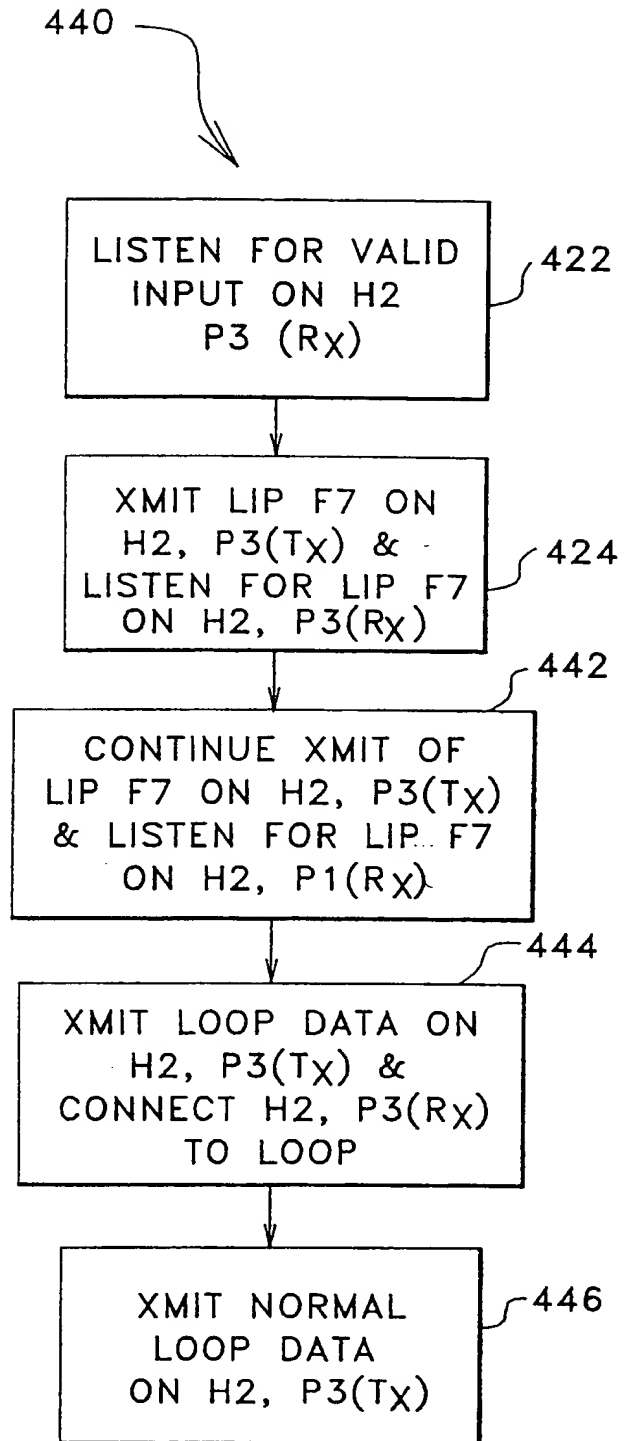


FIG. 22

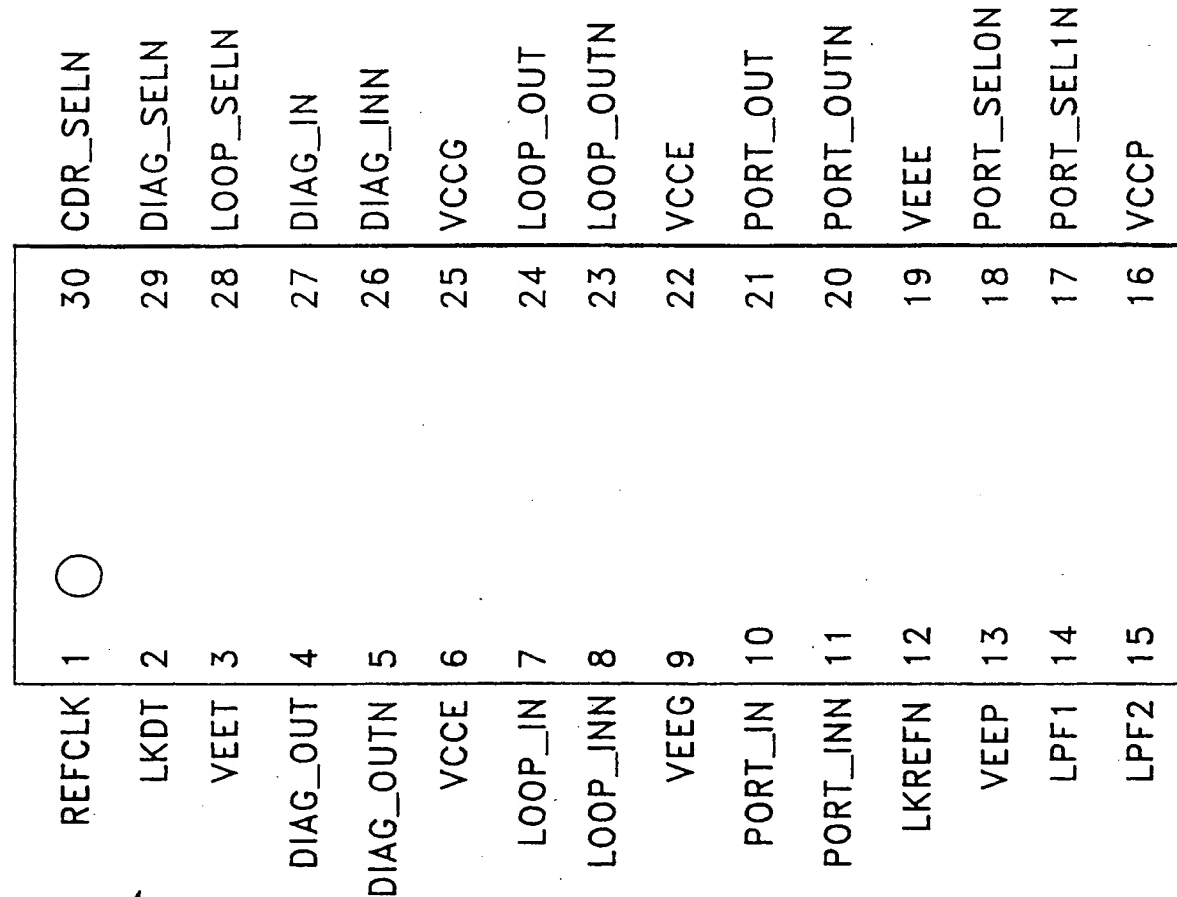


FIG.23

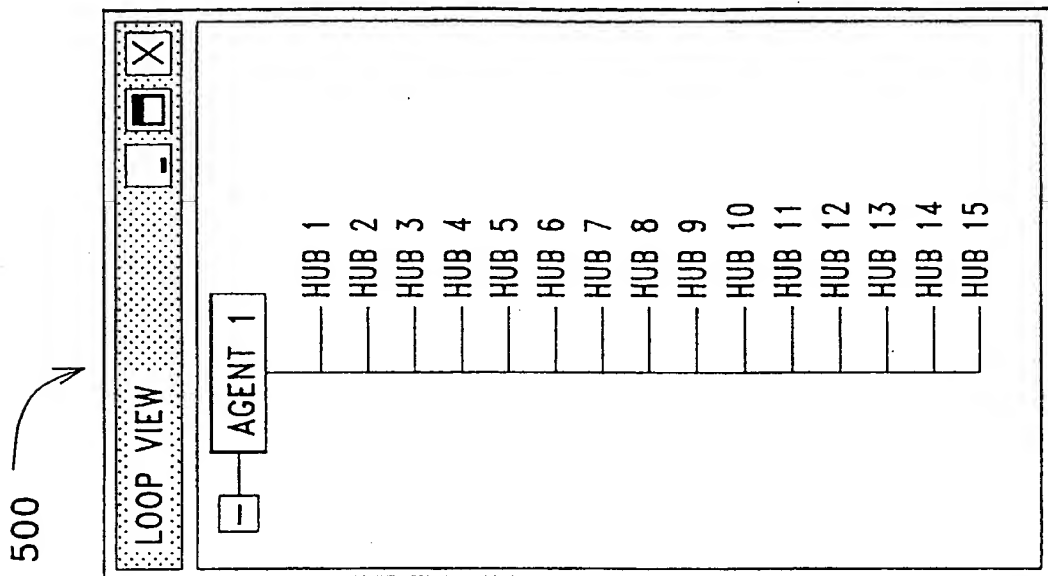


FIG.25

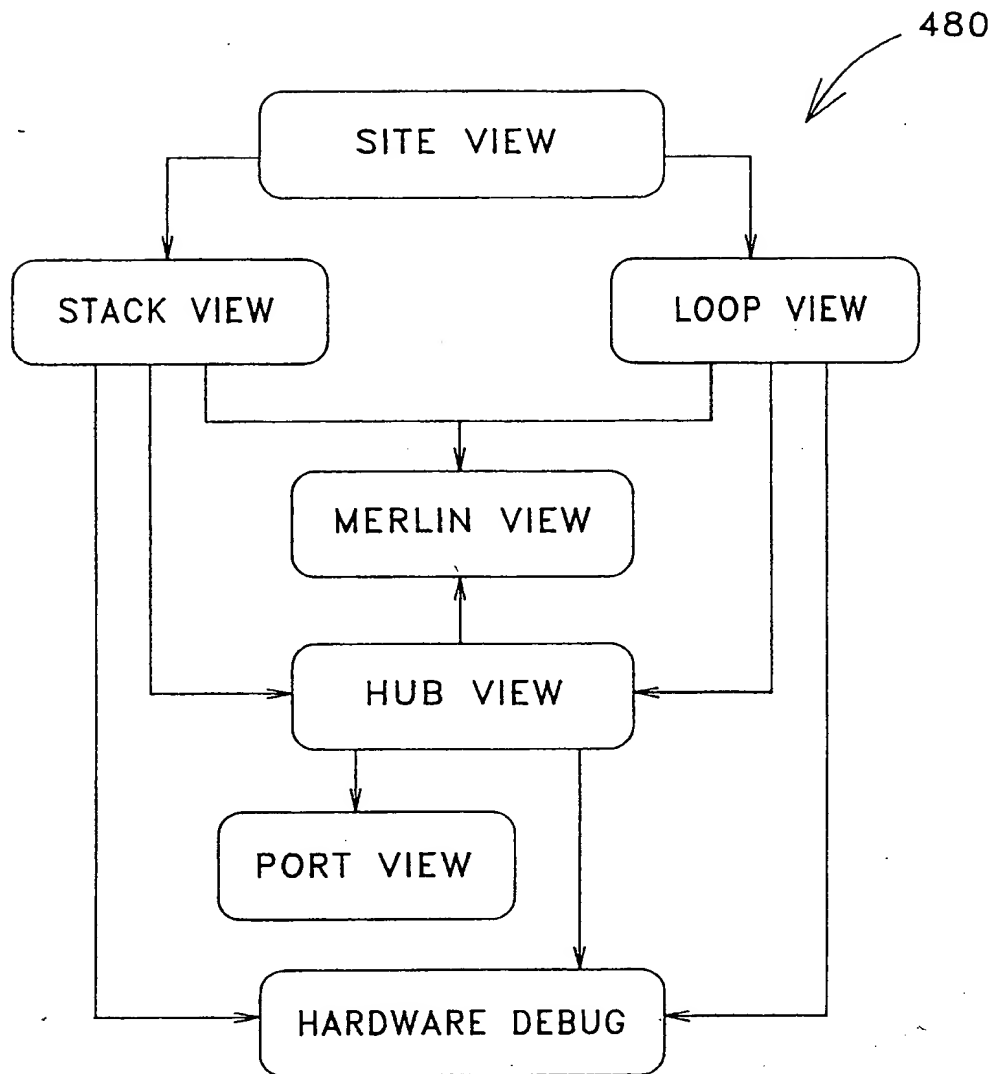


FIG. 24

560

MERLIN MANAGEMENT CARD STATUS SCREEN			
SERIAL#:	02-00197-0002	ACTIVE:	YES
HW REVISION:	01.01	SW REVISION:	01.01
LOCATION:	<u>BLDG 54</u>	NAME:	<u>MERLIN 1</u>
IP ADDRESS:	<u>24.34.233.148</u>	MAC ADDRESS:	080009123456
PRIORITY:	<u>7</u>	<u>FORCE ACTIVE</u>	
MGMT PASSWORD <u>*****</u>			

FIG. 28

520

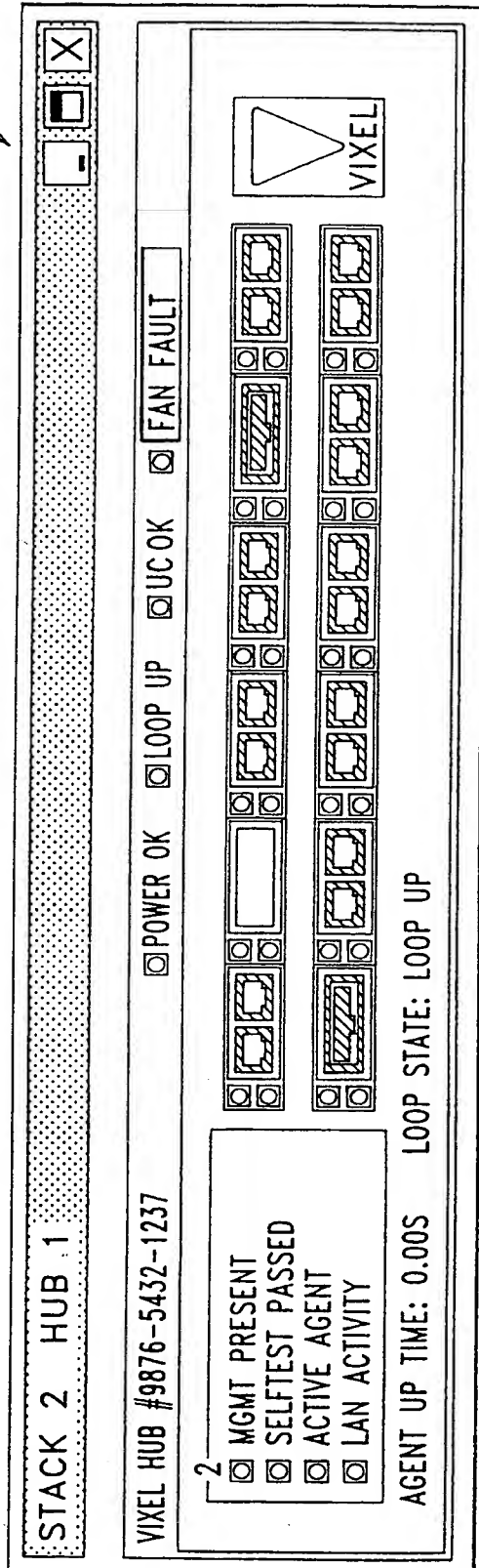


FIG. 26

540

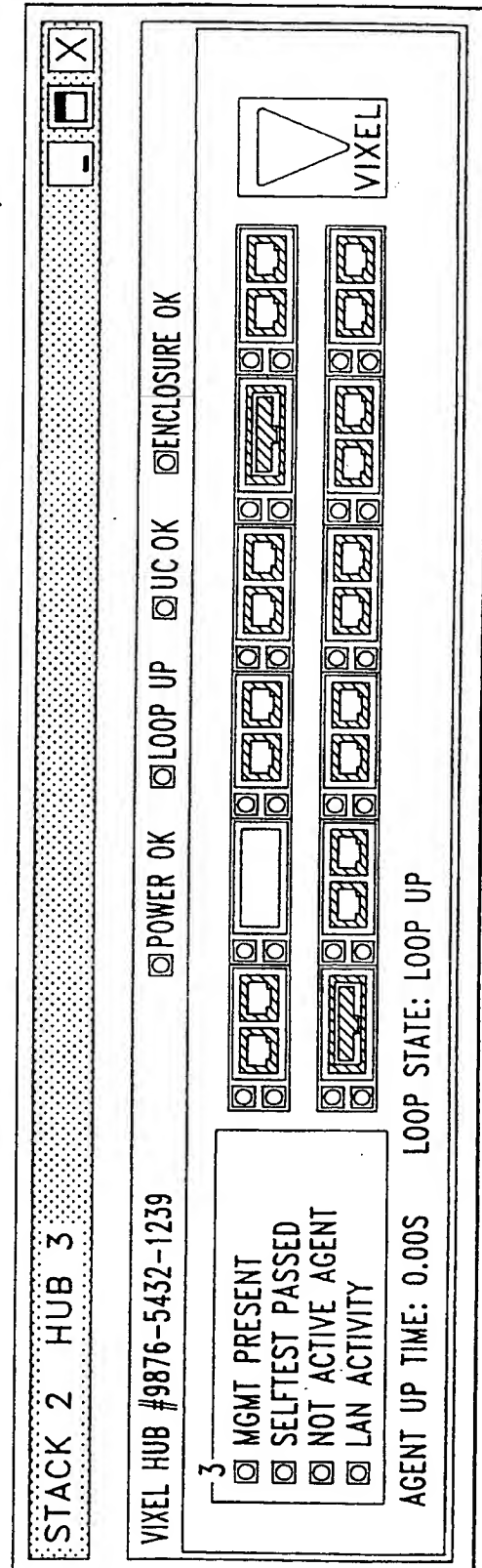


FIG. 27

HARDWARE DEBUG																	
PORTS	HUB	LOOP	STACK	AGENT	DETECT												
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>SELECT PORT NUM</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 1</td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 7</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 2</td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 8</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 3</td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 9</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 4</td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 10</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 5</td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 11</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 6</td><td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/> 12</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p>TRANSMITTER <input type="radio"/> ON <input type="radio"/> OFF</p> <p>RECEIVER <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/></p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p>PORT DIAGNOSTIC CONTROL</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> MOVE DIAG </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CURRENT PORT </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>MATCH: OR</p> <p><input type="radio"/> K28.5 <input type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>TRANSMIT: OR</p> <p><input type="radio"/> K28.5 <input type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> MATCH BASED ORDERED SET CAPTURE </div> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <p>K28.5 <input type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SEND WHILE CKD <input type="checkbox"/> DETECT WHILE CKD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> COUNT WHILE CHECKED: 0</p> <p>DETECTED: <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/> DETECTED LIST <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p> </div> </div> </div>						<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 9	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 10	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 11	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 12
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 7																
<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 8																
<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 9																
<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 10																
<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 11																
<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 12																

FIG. 29

580

HARDWARE DEBUG

PORTS HUB LOOP STACK AGENT DETECT

SELECT PORT NUM

☐ 1 ☐ 9
☐ 2 ☐ 10
☐ 3 ☐ 11
☐ 4 ☐ 12
☐ 5 ☐ 13
☐ 6 ☐ 14
☐ 7 ☐ 15
☐ 8 ☐ 16

RESET PORTS
RESET 12C

HUB SELECTED: HUB SN

HUB DIAGNOSTICS

☐ MATCH:
OR
☐ K28.5

MATCH BASED ORDERED SET CAPTURE

☐ K28.5
☐ DETECT WHILE CHECKED
☐ COUNT WHILE CHECKED: 0
DETECTED: NONE

582

FIG. 30

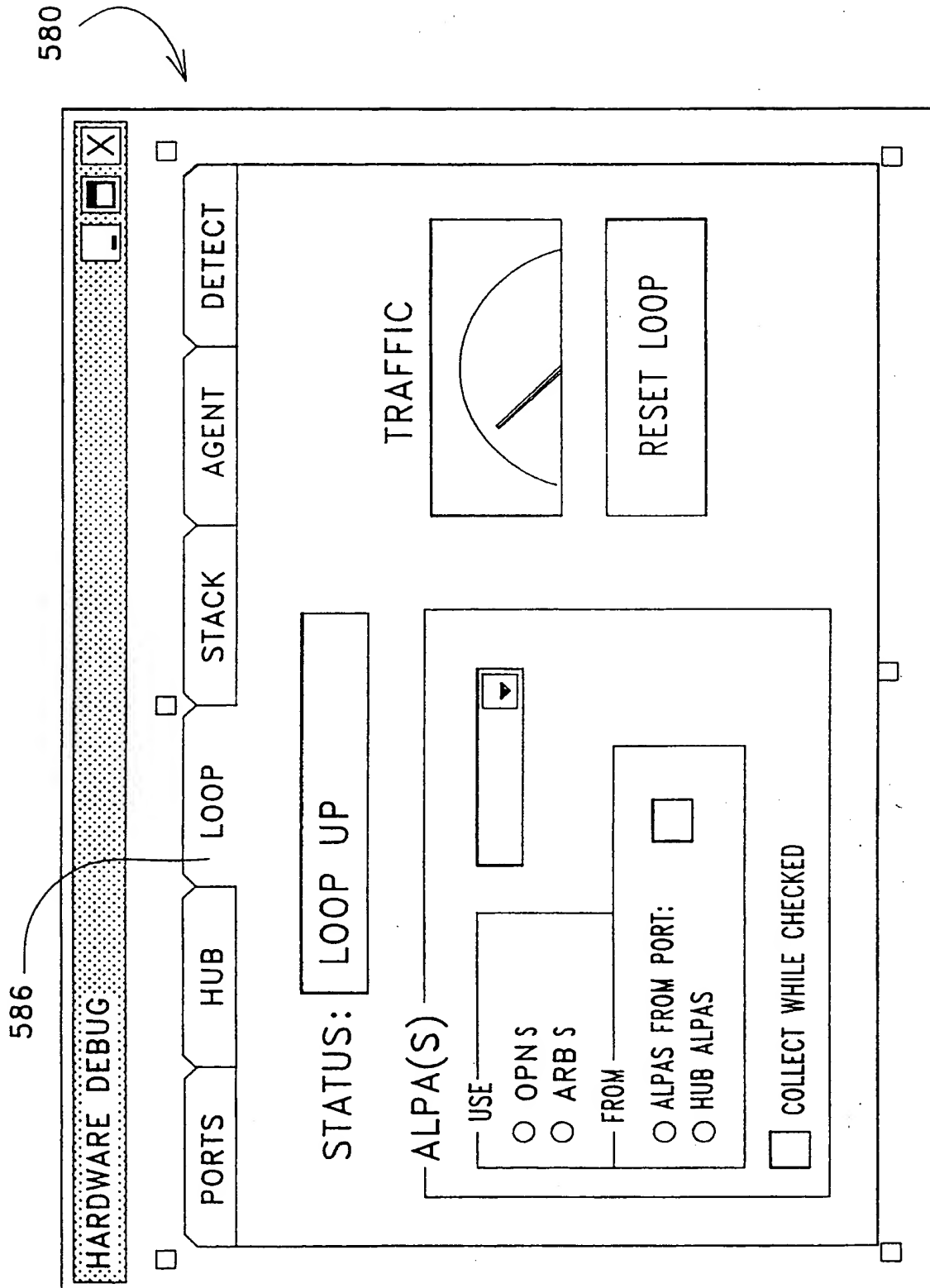
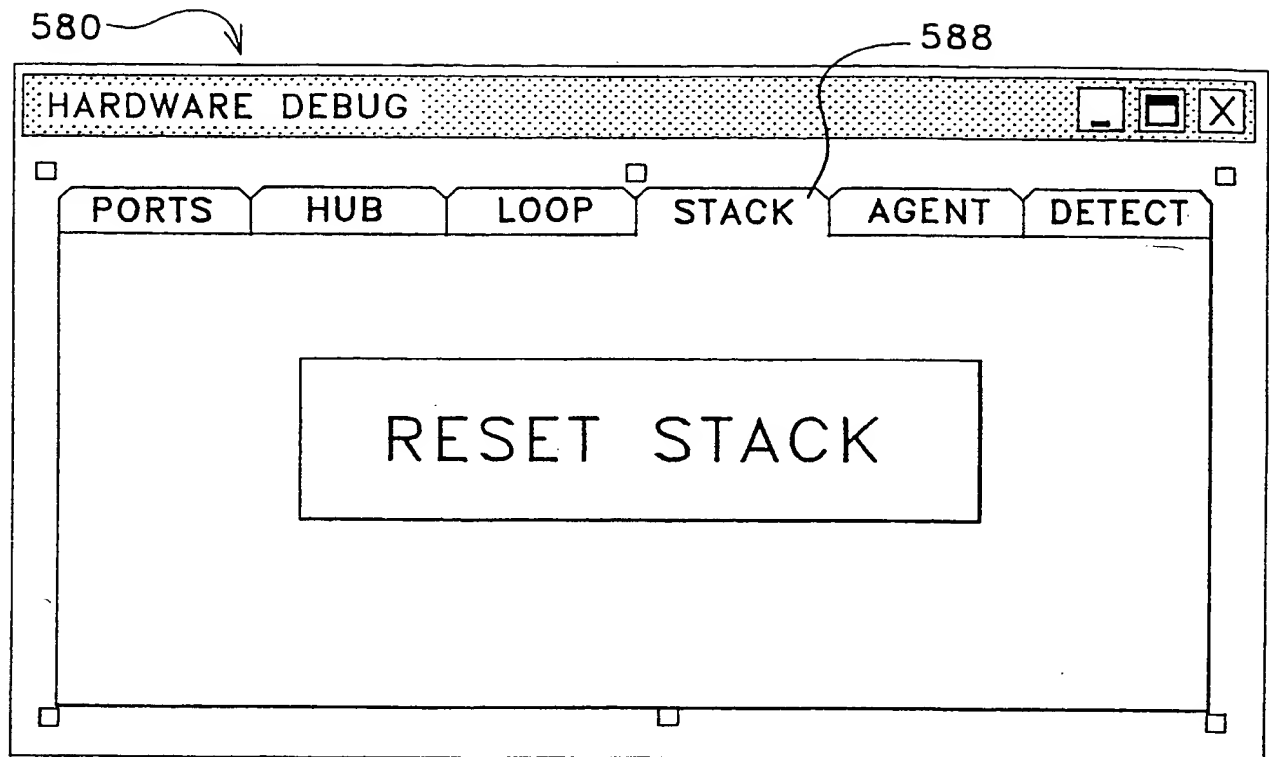
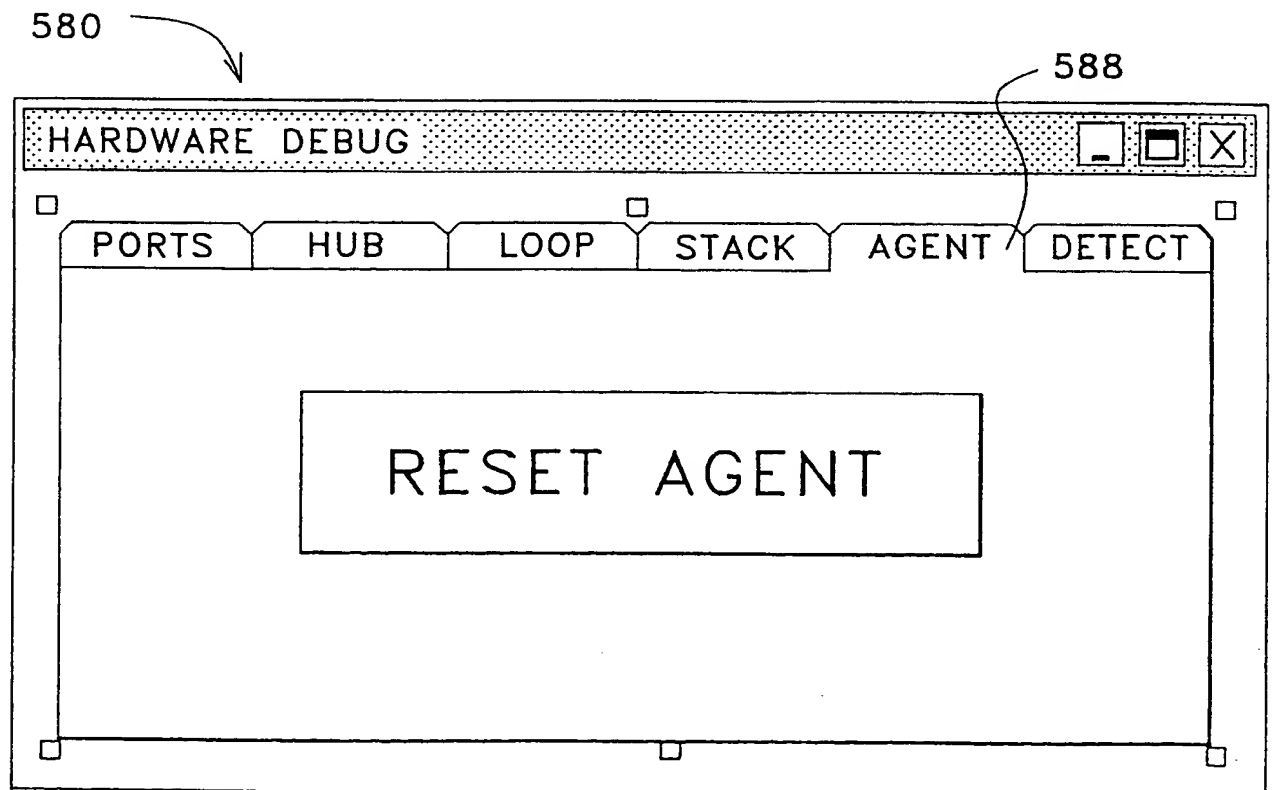
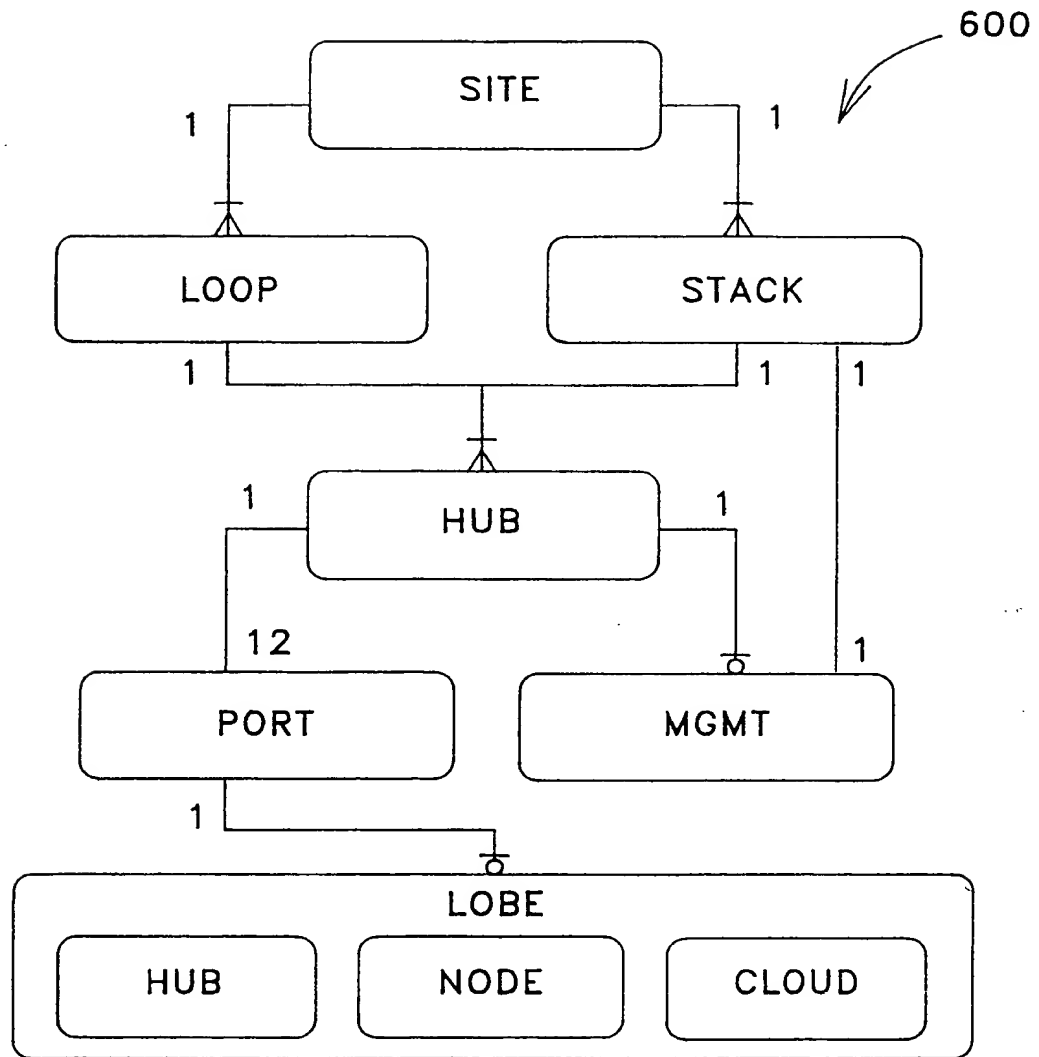


FIG. 31

*FIG. 32**FIG. 33*

*FIG. 34*

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No

PCT/US 99/26924

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 H04L12/26 H04L12/24 H04L12/43

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 H04L G06F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ, INSPEC, IBM-TDB, COMPENDEX

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 390 188 A (DAWSON JOHN E) 14 February 1995 (1995-02-14)	1,18,19, 21,26, 36-38, 46,111, 112,114
Y	column 2, line 40 -column 3, line 12 column 8, line 6 -column 13, line 25 column 15, line 24 -column 17, line 10	2,10,22, 23,25, 33-35, 42,43, 72,74, 92,94, 115
A	column 19, line 32 -column 21, line 63 column 24, line 65 -column 29, line 10	3-9, 11-17, 20,27, 39-41,
	-/--	

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
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T later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

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G document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

16 February 2001

Date of mailing of the international search report

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No

PCT/US 99/26924

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
		44-57, 73, 75-91, 93, 95-102, 113, 116-118
Y	<p>--- WO 98 36537 A (ARXEL TECHNOLOGIES INC) 20 August 1998 (1998-08-20)</p> <p>page 2, line 27 -page 3, line 3 page 15, line 13 - line 21 page 15, line 27 -page 16, line 2 page 16, line 14 -page 17, line 2 page 33, line 1 - line 14 page 34, line 4 - line 8 page 39, line 5 -page 40, line 2</p> <p>---</p>	2,10,42, 43,72, 74,92, 94,115
Y	<p>--- US 5 361 250 A (NGUYEN TRUONG Q ET AL) 1 November 1994 (1994-11-01) column 7, line 14 -column 8, line 55</p> <p>---</p>	33-35
P,X	<p>--- WO 99 57854 A (EMULEX CORP) 11 November 1999 (1999-11-11)</p> <p>---</p>	1-7, 9-11,18, 26,27, 36-38, 42,43, 46,47, 72-74, 92-94, 111,115
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 99/26924

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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A	column 2, line 7 - line 57 column 3, line 19 - line 59 column 5, line 53 -column 6, line 1 claim 1	24
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A	----- TRUESTEDT H L: "FIBRE CHANNEL-ARBITRATED LOOP" COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY REVIEW,US,WESTWORLD PRODUCTION CO. LOS ANGELES, vol. 16, no. 5, 1 May 1996 (1996-05-01), page 36,38,42 XP000642986 ISSN: 0278-9647 page 42, column 2, line 16 -column 3, line 55	123-126

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 99/26924

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. ☒ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☒ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 1-21, 26-57, 72-102, 111-118

Non-invasive monitoring of data flowing in a hub.

2. Claims: 22-25 (as dependent from 1), 58-71, 108-110

Testing the integrity of nodes and lobes connected to a hub.

3. Claims: 103-107, 119-122

Identification of interconnected nodes and hubs.

4. Claims: 123-126

Interconnecting two Fibre Channel loops to form a single loop.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 99/26924

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/09351

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) :H04L 12/42

US CL :370/522

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. 370/522, 400, 406, 410, 424, 460, 462, 522, 528

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,570,361 A (NORIZUKI et al) 29 October 1996, figures 1, 8, 17 and 29.	1-3, 10-11, 15-18
A,P	US 5,799,003 A (FUJIMAKI et al) 25 August 1998, figure 2.	1-3, 10-11 & 15-18
A	US 4,899,969 A (ANNAMALAI) 18 July 1989, figures 1 and 2.	1-3, 10-11 & 15-18

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

02 AUGUST 1999

Date of mailing of the international search report

02 SEP 1999

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